HUMANISM OF HARDEKAR MANJAPPA

The term 'Humanism' has a wide and diverse usage. It may mean a reasonable balance of life as the early humanists discovered in the writings of the Greeks and the Romans. It may mean simply the study of humanities and good literature. It may mean freedom from religiosity and dogmatism. And lastly it may be a philosophy of which man is the ultimate consideration. It is on the basis of this latter point of view that Humanism may be defined as an attitude of mind which gives primary importance to man and to his faculties, affairs and temporal aspirations. Its etymological meaning is contained in the belief that man is the central object of consideration in all walks of life. Humanism as a philosophical doctrine, therefore, imbibes the Protagorean dictum that 'Man is the measure of all things'. This view lends an important element that goes to form the humanist tradition.

Historically, humanism was a movement which represented an extensive change in art, literature and thought, since the beginning of early modern times, in Western Europe. The movement embodied a transition from medieval theological interpretation of man to the modern scientific outlook. Italy was its starting place. Humanists in the beginning were comprised mainly of secretaries, librarians, teachers and others. Sometimes courtiers and officials also joined the movement. About sixty or eighty Italian writers set up the precedent for the European renaissance. They began to study classics in a new spirit. They gave a new appreciation to their literary beauty and the abundant variety of subjects. They were free from the sway of the church and religious sanctity.

The humanists of the modern age, beginning from renaissance, and particularly from Auguste Comte (1798-1857) did not give any importance to the theological conception of man but asserted the intrinsic value of his life before death and the greatness of his potentialities. Hence humanism became identical with philanthropy and altruism. The humanists' attempt was to lessen the suffering of the humanity by increasing the welfare of human society.
Historically, humanism as a systematic philosophical movement was represented by Ferdinand Canning Scott Schiller (1865-1937), in England. However, his 'personal idealism' or 'humanism' was closely related to the Pragmatism of William James. By identifying his pragmatism with humanism, Schiller attempted to resolve metaphysical issues and controversies and applied them to personal human factors which were neglected by many other philosophers. He, therefore, described humanism as opposed to the great attitudes which at that time dominated the philosophical field of absolutism and naturalism. Thus humanism is essentially a protest against naturalism and absolutist metaphysics. Schiller took the position of a moderator between these extremes.

In Jean-Paul Sartre's existential humanism we find the same protest against metaphysical humanism which believes in human values as a priori. He says in his Existentialism and Humanism, "Life is nothing until it is lived; but it is yours to make sense of it, it is nothing else but the sense you choose." Thus existentialism reminds man of his own status—to realise

2. Ibid, p.519.
3. Ibid.
that there is no other legislator of him but he himself. The realization of man as man depends upon himself. He is at liberty to choose and decide. Man is the creator of values. The values useful for man are not God-given or a priori. They are man-made and completely under his control. Thus man is at liberty to fashion himself as he wishes to be. Sartre clarifies existential position that it is not a kind of quietism or pessimism. On the contrary, existentialism gives the message of action in relation to the whole of human society. Moreover, man can elevate himself through action. This is very similar to the teaching of the Gita when it says that salvation can only be obtained by disinterested action. But it is to be mentioned here that Sartre did not consider man to be an end-in-himself, as Kant did believe. On the contrary, Sartre distinguishes existential humanism from that which upholds man as the end-in-himself. Man can never be an end-in-himself, since his position has to be determined ad hoc. This, then, is a bird's-eye-view of humanist tradition in the West.

Hardekar Manjappa's position is quite different from all these versions of humanism. His humanism as we shall see, is a sort of a synthesis of all these
humanist trends. His position is yet to be determined in order to understand him in the light of the humanist tradition. However, it is an undeniable fact that Manjappa, like Gandhiji, was to be ranked as one of the greatest humanists that India has seen.

It may not be inappropriate to write here about some of his qualities of head and heart, his experience and his attitudes, if we want to understand his humanism properly. The virtues of cleanliness, quietude and service, are the key-notes to his character. In his Vidyalaya at Almatti, he endeavoured to place these three ideals before his students. He was greatly drawn towards cleanliness and simplicity. All the materials he used had to be clean and tidy. He abhorred unnecessary talking. He was never the one to indulge in idle talk with others. All this gave others the impression of him as a haughty man. He was always immersed in some work or other. He used to have seven hours' sleep every day. He was of the opinion that sleep was more important to his health than food. He was not given to extravagance. One could see this from the fact that he used a time-piece for 12 years on which he had spent just one-and-a-quarter rupee! After that went out of order, he never bought another time-piece or watch.
However, he was a stickler for punctuality. He did not use equipment usually considered necessary such as the fountain pen. His annual expenditure on dress amounted to some 8 or 10 rupees of Khadi. He used to take one meal a day. He spent only four or five rupees on his food every month. Thus his annual expenses on living came to just 75 rupees.

He did not like urban life. He was irresistibly attracted to the natural beauty of hills and forests. He used to watch the sky at night and it was a regular habit with him. He had the determination to do any work he started, and to stick to any word he might have uttered. It went against his grain to collect people around him by tolerating whatever they did to get his work done by placating them. He could not tolerate slackness in work. Apart from reading and writing, he was fond of gardening.

Manjappa further opined that one might hope to practice successfully the vow of celibacy in body, speech and mind, if one abjured taking salty, sweetish or spicy stuff, took only to unexciting food, controlled his tongue and spurned high ambitions, and pursued highly idealistic activities. It would enhance substantially, said Manjappa, one's mental resources, enabling one to
undertake the work of public welfare. He further opined, if persons who were economically weak and who possessed an average mental calibre, get married, they would not be able to do even this much of public service. That is why Manjappa writes with joy and satisfaction in his autobiography:

"Had I not taken the path I have actually taken, and got married; I might have done no more than increase our population by 4 or 5, saved some 4 or 5 thousand rupees, and drawn by now a monthly pension of Rs. 15 to 20 as a teacher. However, I take comfort from the thought that, instead of that, I have been able to render some service to the public".4

In this background of his character, nature and experience, one may easily assess Hardekar Manjappa's humanism. For the sake of convenience of study his views may be classified as religious, social and others.

1. RELIGIOUS:

Hardekar Manjappa considers only such matters as religious of which we can have no proof—such as God, rebirth, heaven, hell, spiritual merit and sin. He

opines that the human beings have never really understood anything specific about God. Not merely this; he says further, the subject is beyond knowledge and comprehension in its very nature. However wise a man may be, his grasp of this subject is bound to reflect his intellectual level and ideas. Therefore, Manjappa could not approve of those who dogmatically assert that they know the truth in this regard, nor of those who go about persuading others to accept their own views. He simply abandoned all attempts at worrying himself about the truth and untruth in such matters. He may be described as an agnostic in this respect. With his acquaintance with Herbert Spencer's works, Manjappa seems to have concluded that his agnosticism is the right thing.

In religious and social matters Manjappa accepts mostly the views of Bhagavad Gita and the Vacanas or Sayings of Shri Basaveshwara. They are the basis on which he formulated his views on religion. The following saying from the Gita, seems to have influenced his agnosticism:

"Neither the great seers nor the beings
Know of My origination. This is because
I am the cause of all the seers and
Celestial beings (10-2)". 5

5. Manjappa Hardekar, Thirty Years of My Public Life,
Farther he also quotes the following passage from the Bhagavad Gita:

"God does not create men's dutifulness, Karma and its fruits, and their relationship. All these accrue because of its very nature (5-14)"  

Manjappa never accepts the view that God has laid down for man to follow certain obligations in the course of the Vedas and similar texts and that if one follows them, one attains happiness and Heaven; and that if one acts against them, one will experience misery and hell. It is Manjappa's contention that the foregoing sayings from the Gita actually support his views. Further he quotes the following Vacana of Shri Basaveshwara to vindicate his position:

"Behold! between the worlds
Of mortals and of gods
There is no difference!
To speak the truth is world of gods;
To speak untruth, the mortal world.
Good works is Heaven,
Bad works is Hell—
And you can witness it, O Lord Kudala Sangama!"

Then the question arises as to how a person with such views can himself afford to worship the

Linga? Will not amount to a mere outward show? Such a doubt is unfounded, because to Manjappa, the Linga is the visible symbol of the universe. To worship the Linga is to feel inwardly as being one with the universe. Manjappa says that the real purpose of the Linga-worship is to develop and strengthen that universal feeling of oneness or unity with the universe and ultimately to merge with the universe. In support of this thesis of his, he quotes the following Vacana of Shri Basaveshwara:

"Thy widness is the widness of the world,
The widness of the firmament,
Ay, wider still.
Thy feet are deeper than the underworld,
Ay, deeper still.
Thy Crown is higher than Brahma's Egg,
Ay, higher still
Thou Linga, who are imperceptible,
Past understanding and beyond compare,
Didst shrink to the dimensions of a speck
When coming to my palm,
O Kudala Sangama Lord!"

It is his view that those Lingayats who argue that the phenomenon of rebirth is not compatible with the true tenets of the Lingayat Faith would subscribe

8. Linga is the religious symbol of the Lingayats (Veerasaivas). It is the microcosmic representation of the macrocosmic or ultimate reality. Hence it is the object of his worship. It is supposed to be constantly worn on the body by a Lingayat and, therefore, constitutes his distinguishing mark. ibid.

9. Vacanas of Basavanna, p.158.
to the foregoing view. Thus the following Vacana of Shri Basaveshvara further enabled Manjappa's understanding of rebirth:

"I can't the halo of Saints attain,
holding Heaven and earth
as not the same.
Two what you can compare
but sav' ring the sapless end
of sugarcane,—
When to hold — only after
life's spark's extinguished—
Union with the Lord
can be established!
0 Lord Kūdala Sangama".

It is his conviction that all these matters of religion of which no direct proof is possible are matters of individual convictions and arguments. They are related to each individual's intelligence, his emotional make-up and the kind of mental training he has undergone. Therefore Manjappa was led to the conclusion that in such matters dogmatism should have no place and one should try to understand religious tenets and practices of other religions also and take a tolerant view of them. However, he opines, an individual's religious attitudes, principles or

practices should not be such as to cause inconvenience or hurt the feelings of other individuals or creatures.  

Coming to Manjappa's attitude towards ethics, he opines, all human behaviour pertaining to happy and peaceful living in society involves principles of ethics. Of all the ethical principles, Manjappa holds compassion to be the supreme. Therefore, he whole-heartedly endorses the following Vacana of Shri Basaveshvara:

"What sort of religion can it be
Without compassion?
Compassion needs must be
Towards all living things;
Compassion is the root
Of all religious faith:
Lord Kudala Sanga does not care
For what is not like this".  

Manjappa says that all human actions and thoughts should conform to the standards of universal welfare, and they should be pursued with a courage of conviction. It is only such conduct that really betokens moral strength. One should recognise a man's worth and excellence on the basis of his moral fibre. Further he says, religious rituals, meditation and prayers, should be such as to strengthen one's moral fibre and

increase one's enthusiasm towards an ethical behaviour. That is why Manjappa takes the following verse from the Bhagavad Gita as his constant guide in this regard:

"An act in tune with one's essential nature is not to be abandoned, Though defective; for as fire is always accompanied by smoke, All acts are accompanied by defects (18-48)" 13

Thus he opines that one should not indulge in an activity merely to pander to public wish, but one should carry on in accordance with one's character and nature. Long ago he accepted with appreciation Herbert Spencer's dictum that duties exist for man, and not man for duties.

Manjappa was always fond of doing those things which seemed to be truthful and which were in line with his innermost nature. The result was that he had to incur the hostility of even his most intimate friends sometimes. In this conduct of his, the following two Vācaṇas of Shri Basaveshvara have provided the necessary encouragement and enthusiasm to him. That is why the mast-head of his paper Sharana Sandesh carried the following characteristic quotation from Shri Basaveshvara:

"Like adamant in defence of right,  
I am not one for deference.  
Having renounced the world, the sarana  
Is not afraid of anyone, because  
He dwells within the sovereign light  
Of Lord Kudala Sangama."14

Further:

"Not, I the man to serve  
For wages;  
I am a servant at a time of need;  
Not I a servant to take flight.  
Hear me, Kudala Sangama Lord,  
Death is to me  
A solemn festival!"15

It is his belief that if one performs one's duties with a disinterested mind but with compassion, truthfulness and courage, and in accordance with one's own inner nature, one will realise righteousness, heaven and salvation. Thus his thinking is very near to "Karma Yoga" of the Bhagavad Gita and "Arpana Yoga" of Shri Basaveshvara and other Shivasaranas.

Again Manjappa does not accept the views of those who claim that God incarnates in human form either in this world or the other. To Manjappa God sends His messengers to earth. Manjappa further says that no scriptural texts are directly composed by God, and all such efforts are human. He agrees that some men

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14. Vacanas of Basavanna, p. 247
15. Ibid, p. 230
are greater than or superior to others, but however great a man be, Manjappa does not think all his thoughts are beneficial to all at all times. That is why, he did not hesitate to express his honest doubts about Shri Basavesivara, whose genuine disciple he was. In the same way he could and did criticise the Mahatma himself if the occasion demanded it, though he was the greatest preacher and follower of Gandhian ideals in Karnataka. Thus Manjappa does not accept in toto either any book or the ideas of any man, however great he may be, because he believes in the evolutionary approach.

2. SOCIAL:

His social views include the emancipation of the untouchables, upliftment of women, problem of caste and so on. Manjappa concentrated his attention on the problem of the removal of the humiliation of the underprivileged everywhere. He carried on his humanitarian campaign by working among the people of Karnataka itself. It was not so much a political campaign, but a purely humanitarian and social work. He began his movement like the early Italian humanists through a literary enterprise. He established a kind of human laboratory, in which he began to perform his humanitarian experiments.
He started a newspaper Sharana Sandesh with this purpose only. He wrote special articles and editorials to mobilise mass opinion on the grievances of the oppressed people. He encouraged social service, and gave lessons in self-respect and dignity. Manjappa, like Gandhiji, realised that untouchability is the greatest social sin. The literal meaning of untouchability is pollution that follows the touch of an outcaste. But Manjappa like Gandhiji was not concerned with only this aspect of it. He looked at untouchability in a broader sense. It meant to him providing social justice in the fullest sense. Thus the campaign for the removal of untouchability was meant to realise the essential unity of all men. This movement was to be geared up for the complete eradication of the distinction of caste, colour and creed. However one may suppose that the motive of his campaign was to eradicate the invidious distinctions in the Hindu society. The programme for the removal of untouchability had a wider significance. It aimed at binding every individual in a single thread of love. The idea behind this programme was to unite and bring together the disintegrating sections and forces of the Hindu Community, for there is no other community in the world which formed a separate untouchable class within itself. If one fails
to wake up to the humanism in such situations, it has but to be called intellectual blindness. In his Presidential Address to the Dharwar District Congress Conference held at Haveri in 1923, Manjappa declared emphatically, "...that it was more beneficial to the country to worship the untouchables, instead of a Brahmin or a Jangama." 16 In fact, he had advocated feeding the untouchables instead of Brahmins and Jangamas on all auspicious occasions. It was Manjappa's humble view that Gandhiji's christening the untouchables as 'Harijans' was not appropriate, and it would be more appropriate to call them the 'Adijans' (aboriginals). 17 It was then that he wrote and published a volume entitled Adijana Suchārane (The Reform of the Untouchables). He advocated in that book early emancipation of untouchables and appealed to the public and the authorities to work for the upliftment of these hapless untouchables who were spread all over the country with different names. He suggested for this purpose certain programmes to uplift these aboriginals. They are as follows: 18

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1. The term untouchability should be given up.
2. They should be allowed to go to public wells, temples and so on like the caste Hindus.
3. They should be provided with equal rights to mingle with others in places like educational institutions, public meetings and in other places of public resort.
4. The separate lanes of Adi.jans in villages should be dispensed with. Ghettos should be removed and they should be allowed to live along with and in the midst of caste Hindus.
5. To remove illiteracy among Adi.jans, arrangements should be made for education by providing facilities like Hostels, scholarships, rewards etc.

At the same time Manjappa suggested certain duties for the Adi.jans. They are as follows: 19

1. To abstain completely from the habit of drinking liquor. By doing this, he felt their financial and health conditions would improve,

19. Ibid.
2. To give up the consumption of dead animals' flesh.

3. They should not think of getting themselves converted to other religions for the sake of wealth, job etc., and also no Adiyan should remain as untouchable for the sake of benefits extended by the Government.

4. Secure all help from others only for education.

5. Bad habits should be given up by remaining clean and money should be saved for proper living.

6. Be clean, by taking bath daily or at least twice in a week and wear washed clothes.

This only shows his sympathetic attitude towards untouchables and he was really interested in eradicating untouchability.

Like Auguste Comte, the founder of positivism, the position of the woman in society was another problem which attracted the attention of Manjappa. He opined in the preface to his book, Sthree Neethi Sangraha (Ethical Maxims for Women), "Women are mothers of the Nation. Their morale alone can bring peace and happiness
to mankind. The main duty of the people who aspire for the happiness of mankind is to make them literate so that their morale is strengthened. He argued that man has dominated woman from ages past; she has, therefore, developed an inferiority complex. She has been trained in such a way that she could get salvation only by sacrificing her life for her husband's appetites and values. In this connection Manjappa, like Gandhiji, seems to be a determined rebel. He further noted in the preface of the same book, "Men and women are the two branches of the human race. Further, men and women are the two wheels of the chariot-like nation. If this is the case, who is superior and who is inferior? Among the two, if any one considers himself or herself as superior and the other inferior; both will have to lead a miserable life. So, those who intend to uplift the entire nation should not treat women as their slaves. If they do so, all their efforts will certainly become futile ..." In order to improve the conditions of Indian women he wrote another book Dampatya Dharma, wherein Manjappa suggested certain measures and reforms to raise the status of Indian women. They are as follows:

21. Ibid.
Primary education should be compulsory to each and every woman. But higher education should be provided to those who are extra-ordinary.

Inter-caste marriage among the Hindus is to be encouraged.

Dowry system should be completely abolished.

Widow-remarriage can be permitted. He appealed to one and all to come forward and do their utmost to uplift the women in society.

In Manjappa's opinion there must be equal rights for all to enjoy all the comforts and conveniences of this world. There should be no gradation among the people into high and low on the basis of nationality, race, sex, caste, religion or sect. There should be equal freedom for all men and women in religious and social matters. None should be regarded as high or low solely on the ground of birth. The Hindu system of castes and sub-castes, like the Brahmin, whose basis is birth, cannot be accepted. They are also not conducive to public welfare. Again Manjappa does not approve of the four-fold caste classification expounded in the Bhagavad Gita. It is his view that it was a great achievement of Shri Basaveshvara that he worked for the eradication of
caste, root and branch. That is why Manjappa considers the following Vacana of Shri Basaveshvara as crucial to our social problems, and immortal in its message:

"Chennayya, the cobbler, is my sire;
Kakkayya: the tanner, my uncle is;
Chikkayya is my grandsire, lol
My elder brother is Bommayya the lutanist.
Then,why, Kūdala Sangama, do you not
Take cognisance of me?"

Therefore, Manjappa opines that the present deplorable condition of the Indians can be attributed to their social system based on castes and sub-castes. He says that such a system must perish. To bring this about, according to Manjappa, it is necessary to create revolution in men's thinking. However, to Manjappa, it is more easy from a practical point of view to begin with the problem of eliminating the internal conflicts and frictions within religions and castes. He argues that matters like dining and other social customs such as marriage and physical relationship, should be matters of free, personal choice. The only limits can be with regard to those that retard the development of one's mind and body. To Manjappa, this indeed is the secret of regulated behaviour.

23. Vacanas of Basavanna, m.114.
In addition, mention may be made of Manjappa's attitude towards education, prohibition of liquor, truth and non-violence, individual freedom etc.

Manjappa's ideas regarding education are no less important from the point of view of his humanism. Education is conceived by Manjappa as the harmonious development of the whole personality of the individual. To Manjappa, education which will not be conducive to self-reliance and comfortable living among the people does not deserve to be called by that name. So he said, let us not remain content with the existing system of education which makes us fit only for subordination and servitude. He, therefore, laid stress upon technical and religious education. By technical education he meant that education should provide a sense of self-security. One of the aims of education should be to provide employment. Thus he advised, that our youth should go in thousands to the advanced countries of the West to receive education in industrial technology; and after their return they must help to augment the national wealth. The work of educating the people is the responsibility of the educated few. That is why he himself started a school at Almatti in 1927. The school was craft-centred and sought to bring education and life
The aims of school have already been discussed in the Second Chapter of this thesis.

When Hardekar Manjappa advocates prohibition of liquor he does so not because it constitutes morality in itself, but because it removes an hindrance to good life. The prohibition of the sale of intoxicating drinks aims at removing from the environment such detrimental factors which stand in the way of the well being of its citizens. Prohibition is not a case of compelling men to be moral. It is merely a case of removing hindrances. "Drink", says Gandhiji, "is more a disease than a vice". Again he writes: "Diseased persons have got to be helped against themselves". In the same way Manjappa used to advise people to stop the drinking and such other evil habits. He had himself seen many a youth ruined by such evil habits. So in the year 1925 he took a tour along with Shri Bathanal Mahaswamiji in the Bijapur District. The main task was to wean away the people from tobacco and tea, and to convert them to the use of Khadi. People became so conscious of their activities that whenever they entered a village the word

25. Young India, January 12, 1928.
went round that these people who are bent upon eradicating the evil of tobacco had arrived. The main aspects to which he directed his attention during his village tours were as follows:

1. the population of a village,
2. the school,
3. the extent to which the habits of tobacco and tea prevailed,
4. spinning,
5. the prevalent handicrafts,
6. Cleanliness;
7. the leaders of the village, and
8. the persons who were enthusiastic about work.

He used to study these aspects in every village, and then put them down in writing. He compiled virtually a hand-written volume entitled *Village Tours*. Because of this he could at least learn something about our village life. Thus in his Presidential remark at the conference of the farmers of the Southern part of Belgaum District at Bailhongal in the year 1931, Manjappa advised peasants that their economic reform could not come about unless they gave up gambling, extravagance, litigation

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and other evil habits.\textsuperscript{28}

Coming to his attitude towards truth and non-violence, one could say that it was his practice to condemn any departure from the Gandhian ideals of truth and non-violence on the part of Congress workers, though he differed in certain respects from Gandhiji. The result was that he became unpopular with many Congress workers in Karnataka. Many friends started avoiding him. He knew that he could have earned greater public esteem if he had joined the Congress or refrained from his criticism of the Congress. But such a behaviour would not give him satisfaction or peace of mind. That is why he acted in the political field according to his own lights such as they were. He derived satisfaction only from such conduct. Though Manjappa was attracted by Gandhian principles of truth and non-violence in 1920 and used to criticise those who departed from them; yet within a decade he found that with the help of truth and non-violence alone India could not attain her independence from the British. So after 1930 he did not join Gandhian movement of Civil Disobedience or deliberately breaking the laws. He thought it was only a political strategy of Gandhiji and not based on any

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{28} Manjappa Hardekar, Muvattu Varshada Nanna Kanike, p.78.}
principle. He started to criticise Congress policies manipulated by Gandhiji after 1934. Thus he was fed up with the Congress methods and became an ardent follower of Shri Veer Savarkar and the Hindu Mahasabha ideology in the later years of his life.

Though Manjappa believed that excessive attachment to the individual self is the root-cause of national downfall, he never minimised individual freedom. He was a libertarian in his outlook. He himself refused to surrender his right to free thinking for the sake of any person or institution. Even though he was a genuine disciple of Shri Basaveshvara, he did not hesitate to express his honest doubts about him. None could have held Gandhi in high esteem or practised his ideals with greater sincerity than Manjappa, yet he did not hesitate to disagree with him. This was also the basis of his advocacy of toleration. He felt that nothing is worthwhile unless it is backed up by genuine personal conviction. His social ideal obviously implied the individual as a basic value. Moreover, the Gandhian philosophy to which he subscribed gave the individual an important place. 29

To conclude, it can be said that Manjappa's humanism was in consonance with the prophetic tradition in which man is not the ultimate consideration nor is he the subjective creator of the values as Sartre believes. Man is the instrument for the expression of the divine in him. He has to act in accordance with the will of God. Manjappa's humanism was shaped in the spirit of the humanism of Shri Basaveshvara, Buddha and all saints and reformers who had made human service the mission of their life and at the same time wanted to identify themselves with the Maker. This humanism had, in anchorage, something more than human. Manjappa's humanism was a theocentric humanism. His humanism transcends the humanism as commonly understood today. But humanism as traced out in the Western tradition is merely anthropocentric humanism as it considers man as ultimate. This is based upon empiricism and positivism. It is scientific in its character. However, both realize the value of human existence and aim at the welfare of humanity. And the humanism of Manjappa derives its validity and power from something higher than man and deeper than him of which he just becomes the vehicle or channel of expression.