Review of: "Intellectualism without Humanism is more Dangerous than Illiteracy"

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The subject of this paper has much promise, especially when the purpose and function of scholarship is under such scrutiny. The authors are to be congratulated for their efforts. At the same time, it is not clear what kind of paper is being written, as much of it seems personal unsubstantiated reflection. This is especially noticeable because there is a wealth of scholarship on this subject, which the authors seem not to have consulted. Too much of the paper is overbroad generalization, and the argument is often unclear.

Problematic are references to “humanism,” especially as the authors do not offer a clear definition. There seems to be confusion between “humanism” as anything to do with humankind and the “humanities” as those disciplines which investigate what it means to be human, and, which, some would argue, are intended to cultivate, and protect the best of human endeavor. Consequently, even the title seems vague in its reference to “Intellectualism without Humanism.”

Regrettably, this paper is deeply flawed, and requires substantial reworking if it is to meet the standards of a refereed journal. Most immediate is the quality of the writing, which is awkward, ungrammatical, and sometimes impossible to understand. As well, there are serious problems with diction as the authors use inappropriate and sometimes incorrect words. Typical examples among many are “the only way to imbibe a worthy ethical lifestyle” when it should be “cultivate” and “civility cannot be entirely chatted without the grave damage to humanity” when the word should be “discussed.”

More fundamental, however, is the quality of the argument. While there is merit in a discussion of contemporary scholarship as a vehicle for ethical or moral transformation, there is just too much that is confusing and not developed. The authors claim to distinguish African scholarship from western scholarship, but fail to do so, and use words such as “education,” “scholarship” and “learning” interchangeably as if they mean or refer to the same time. The discussion of “intellectualism,” “logicalty,” and “criticality,” words not used in typical scholarly discourse, and the claim that those who do not exercise these qualities are illiterate and defective does not bear up. To say that to be “illiterate” “is to be limited to certain evil and devilish knowledge” is truly an outrageous claim. And it is almost impossible to make sense of passages such as “Scholarship here implicates the idea of education, that is, the learning process. It could be liked to the concept of erudition, or those learning exercises structured for people to go through and get mastery of the applied and theoretical knowledge of that discipline.”

Much more could be written here. But it is best if the authors take another look at their paper, and at the very least use an experienced editor to improve the writing. It is unfortunate that the paper does not fulfil what it promises.