



Scholarship without humanism is more dangerous than illiteracy

Anayochukwu Kingsley Ugwu^{1*}, Hilary Chimezie Ngwoke² and Aloysius Uchechukwu Anyanwu³

¹ Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Social Sciences, Madonna University, Nigeria

² Department of Philosophy, Faculty of the Social Sciences, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

³ Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

Correspondence Author: Anayochukwu Kingsley Ugwu

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Abstract

It is an expectation from scholars to positively lead exemplary lifestyles following the fact (assumption?) that their intellects have received purification and nurture to identify the 'good'; and subsequently, walk in the way that leads to the 'good'. That should be the nature of scholarship for its process enlightens the minds, after which one could be referred to as an intellectual, a scholar. But it is unfortunate that this expectation has not been realized, as scholars, in the process of exercising their scholarship, lose the essence which gears towards humanism, and become beastly in nature. This calls for a re-evaluation of the nature of scholarship and the expectations of scholars. Where has scholarship or scholarly process got it wrong to inculcate the very opposite of what is expected of its onus, in people participating in it? Is the factor responsible for this, in the process, or environmental dependent, or what scholars have constituted as the nature of scholarship? In addressing these questions, this paper finds out that it is the emphasis on living a logical and critical life as scholars, and influences from the intellectual products of scholars, expressed in their philosophies of life, theories and ideologies that have encouraged this opposite development of in humanism. The results or expectations from this paper include: (1) To unravel the already experiencing dangers of this anomaly, (2) To advise scholars to toe more, the way of humanism than the extremist life of criticality and logic in the process of displaying their scholarship, and (3) To postulate a more humanistic model as an essential scholarly exercise. The paper shall adopt conceptual analysis and a humanistic approach as methods.

Keywords: Humanism, Illiteracy, Scholarship, Inhumanity, Logical, Intellect, Critical

1. Introduction

Imagine in a certain country where strike action is a means through which higher academic institutions express their opinions as against any unfavourable government policy. In such country, imagine in a certain university, a supervisor tells his/her supervisee that s/he will not, during any strike action, read what the supervisee has written because doing so does not portray him/her as a disciplined and faithful scholar to the University Lecturers' Union. Adding to this, s/he argues that the logic and critical rationale behind the institution of the union and its policies demand such discipline and faithfulness from member-scholars. The supervisee is, thus, tied down till the action is over, when the supervisor would now begin to look into what s/he (the supervisee) has written. This has brought extra years accompanied by heavy financial consequences and time-wasting on many students. But it is not against the scholarly policies, discipline and scholarship of that same lecturer-supervisor to be making papers and attending academic gatherings during the strike action.

Again, imagine in an office occupied by three scholars— Mr. A, Mr. B and Mr. C. Mr. A gave out a serious warning to both Mr. B and Mr. C. that on no account should anything from them or any of their visitors (whether fellow scholars or students) be found on his table or corner. The reason is that as scholars, there should be discipline and maturity which common sense, critical thinking and the logic of being scholars demand from them all. On one fateful day, only Mr. B and Mr. C were in the

office, while chairs and space that could give a certain level of comfort is there not unutilized. A student who came for academic guide from Mr. B collapsed having stood long waiting to be attended to, in the queue, by Mr. B, and having been seriously warned never to lean on Mr. A's table or even go near his corner. Unfortunately, on the way to rush the student to the hospital, s/he gave up the ghost.

In these two scenarios, what played out was an observation of scholarly policies and the logic and critical thinking-demands from the scholars involved. Thus, to show that you are a true scholar, your life has to be guided by certain critical thinking, logic and principles of life and then discipline. Unfortunately it was in observing such scholarly lifestyle that the ugly incidents which were avoidable, if applied humanism, happened. But certain questions beg for answers: when, in the process of adhering to this scholarly principle and logical lifestyle, human life is at stake, which should morally and rationally prevail? Could there be any possible relationship between this scholarly lifestyle and applying sense of humanism (empathy) for the life of fellow human being? Could it even be said that the factors responsible for this are in what scholars have conceived as the nature of scholarship, or principles of intellectual ideologies instilled in scholarly exercise and affectively acquired by people undergoing scholarship exercise, or even environmental-based factors which scholars acquire? What is then the nature of the concept of 'scholarship'? What process

would be the best to participate in that concept? What could be the utmost aim of scholarship, and what is the relationship between scholarship and the humanity of those scholars participating in scholarship?

2. Scholarly and classical positions on the concept, 'Scholarship'

The term 'scholarship' was invented and popularized during the medieval era, the era of scholasticism hence it could be traced to the term 'school'. Scholars could therefore be referred to as 'school men'; or in other interpretation, portrays "student, one who receives instruction in a school, one who learns from a teacher" or "a pupil, scholar." Scholarship implicates the idea of "learning, erudition, character and qualities of a scholar" (<https://www.etymonline.com>). From this, scholarship presents a scenario of formal learning and academic engagements in a four walls of schools (higher institutions/universities). This aspect of formality is a cardinal point of difference between 'scholarship' and 'education'.

But it is unfortunate that some philosophers either mistook the two concepts as one, or end up explaining the other while explaining one. Some early Greek philosophers like Epictetus, Plato, etc., are clear instances. It is Epictetus' position that only the educated are safe. The implication of this is that being educated is the only way out from 'bad' to 'good'. With this, a mental revolution is possible; a re-orientation of conceptual scheme is assured and hopes for a better future are raised. In other words, it could be said that education is the only way to be safe, where 'safety' is to 'grab the good life'. But the question now is: 'what is the good life?' Many scholars have given their dissent voices to the idea of a good life, some taking a hedonistic stand maintaining a "moderately but pleurably" lifestyle by upholding that "pleasure must be in some way an ingredient of happiness" hence "pleasure is the sole good" (Popkin and Stroll 1975, 10-11). Others take an intellectual stand, and many others, attitudinal/behavioural dispositions. However, it must be recalled that the Epictetan emphasis is on the fact that being educated is the main gate to being safe in life, and being safe in life implies grasping the concept of the 'good'. That is to say that without education, human beings remain unsafe, hence, blind to that which is good; consequently, there will be no discovery of the good, hence the thrive of unsafety and the bad. This position could be likened to that of Sridhar when she writes: "Education is not just for mere living but for life, a fuller life, a more meaningful and a more worthwhile life" (Sridhar 2014, 18).

To the Greek ethicist and humanist, Socrates, the product of education— knowledge— could be equated to virtue, while the very opposite— ignorance— to vices. This ethical principle was very much influential that his student, Plato imbibed it as a guide to his ethical theory. Plato (Popkin and Stroll 1975, 2-3) holds that "it is generally assumed in such theories that if we know what the good life is, we will naturally act in such a way as to try to achieve it" hence "finding the nature of the good life is an intellectual task very similar to the discovery of mathematical truths." Then to put it straight, "evil is due to lack of knowledge" and this knowledge could be attained through

(1) direct undergoing an educational process, (2) emulating or imitating from the display of those who underwent an educational process, by this, "virtuous habits of behaviour" is attained, or (3) allowing those who underwent an educational process, by this, there will be 'development of mental powers' to attain virtues (Popkin and Stroll 1975, 3). However, as an idealist, he later maintains an ideal conception of education *vis-à-vis* finding the good life, as he opines that "goodness exists independently of men and remains to be discovered if men can be properly trained," and this training here implicates the idea of the three listed processes above. However, emphasizing this point, Plato remarks that education:

makes a man eagerly pursue the ideal perfection of citizenship and teaches him how rightly to rule and how to obey. This is the only education which in our view deserves the name; that other sort of training which aims at the acquisition of wealth or bodily strength or mere cleverness, apart from intelligence and justice is mean and illiberal and is not worthy to be called education at all (Rusk 1969, 30).

There are many other scholars who believe in the power of education as not just the major source of livelihood and making life worth living and appreciatively, but the only way to imbibe a worthy ethical lifestyle. Empiricist scholars like Berkeley, Locke, Rousseau, a rationalist like Kant, and many educationists like Sridhar, etc., have all believed the cognitive power of man to understand and behave ethically is commendable. These scholars believe that the mind/intellect can grab what is taught or displayed to it, and that can influence the thinking and actions proceeding from the mind and as displayed through the body. In other words, what the mind comes in contact with, it assimilates and then from an internally generated principle influences certain reactions in men which would be displayed in words, actions and thought, and the gap between the appeared phenomenon and the intellect/mind is scholarship, that is, a process of education, learning and assimilation of that which is educated about and learnt, and subsequently its display through human behaviours and actions. It is the questioning of the effects of this scholarly end product, that is, the effects of that which is grabbed, studied/learnt and displayed through human thinking and actions, that this paper focuses on. Have they furnished humanity hopes for posterity by projecting more positivity, or have they encouraged the otherwise?

Standing on this, as we could see, many like Plato, and others would answer in the affirmative, on one hand. But many like Rousseau, and other African scholars and sages like Ki-Zerbo, and others would answer in negation, on the other hand.

The Jewish-German scholar, Rousseau would first appreciate the product of scholarship which is expressed in many ways for human livelihood like civilization; but this would not go without a huge damage to humanity. In fact, he opines that the corruption of nature, that is, the existential state of man that knows true peace, co-habitation without boundary, the genuine practice of communalism, etc. was because of civilization which proceeded as an end product of scholarship. The Rousseau's state of nature is significantly different from those of Hobbes and Locke, as that of the former does not tolerate

personal rather communal ownership of properties, those of the latter tolerates even though with limits as seen in that of Locke. While that of Hobbes opposes that of Rousseau on the ground that it is negative to humanity as it encourages brutishness and inhumanities, that of Rousseau would disagree with that of Hobbes on the ground that even if there would be elements of occurrence of what Hobbes says, it is still better off than the evil and the level of negativity that would emerge in the Hobbesian proposed civility. In other words, this scholarly argumentative scenario could be compared to the saying that the worst democracy is better off than the best military regime. Rousseau puts his argument straight in the following lines: "The first person who, having enclosed a piece of land decided to say, 'this is mine', and found people who were simple enough to believe him was the real founder of civil society" (1963, 292). For Rousseau, men begin to grow to selfishness, which is expressed in personal ownership, when they receive civility as inherited in scholarship, and that is a damage to humanity.

Another scholar like Ki-Zerbo would align his thought with that of Rousseau upholding that civility cannot be entirely chatted without its grave damage to humanity. Coming from his African communalistic consciousness where community ownership characteristically prevails as the personality of the African peoples and that which identifies the truism of being African, he upholds that the concept of real evil in Africa begins with the civilization as introduced into Africa by the Europeans (Ki-Zerbo 1962, 267-82). In fact, there is no evil of civilization than the European perpetuated slavery, colonialism and the instillation of neo-colonialist principles in the religio-political lives of Africans, religious conceptual crisis, among other negativity of the Western scholarly activities in Africa. That was a practical manifestation of the Ki-Zerbo's position, for such evils emerged with the education, scholarship process as structured, patterned in the Western scheme.

Many African scholars and sages like traditional highlife artists and sages like Chief Akunwafor Ezeigbo Obiligbo, Chief Steven Osita Osadebe, Chief Mr. Celestine Ukwu, Chief Oliver de Coque, Chief Akunwata Ozoemena (Nwa) Nsugbe, among others, would even agree more with the Rousseau's and Ki-Zerbo's positions that scholarship or show of intellectualism among African families, is the real cause of the evil bedevilling many African communities today. In fact, in the words of Chief Akunwata Ozoemena (Nwa) Nsugbe; *Ọ bụ oke agụ m akwụkwọ wetara awa-m anya n'emebi obodo* (it is too much of reading (scholarship) that triggered too much of wisdom display (intellectualism of lifestyle guided by logical and critical thinking tenets) that is destroying communities). For Ozoemena, intellectualism, as displayed in the criticality and logicity of those who claim to have arrived through scholarship and the Western pattern of civilization, are the fundamental causes of social inequality, discrimination, economic subjugation and suppression of some groups by another, power and fame tussling through which killings and destructions of people's hard-earned facilitators of livelihood, staining of the purity of the land, its deity-hood with human blood, have emerged, among other evils of show of civilization.

For Ayaka Ozubulu, intellectualism sees for the *awa-m anya* (wisdom, cleverness) which has not only disorganized the communities, but also has sharpened more the African human insatiability (*anya ukwu*) which leads to inhumanity and individualistic instead of communalistic lifestyle.

It is from the principle of intellectualism that Igbo-Africans could no longer say and pilot their socio-political and religious affairs in accordance with certain principles expressed in certain aphorisms like *anaghi azọ eze azọ* (kingship is not struggled for). For them, it is divinely bestowed. In this same realm of consciousness, community development in the Igbo-African olden days was community-focused and planned, unlike today, everything is personalized and privatized by those with political, religious, economic, wealth and financial muscles and influences to overrun the whole community. All these overrunning-enhancing-factors are of European orientations and products of civility as acquired through scholarship and the act of being educated. And the height of this exercise gets to its maximum when, if one dares to open up on these evils as perpetuated by these scholars or civilizers and civilizing agents, one either risks one's life or being an archival; the case of the death of Walter Rodney, the author of *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* is one still begging for clearness today.

It is in addressing these questions that the paper observes that this kind of institutionalized scholarly lifestyle is the brain behind many inhumanness or anti-humanist tendencies seen in the attitudinal disposition of many scholars/intellectuals as experienced in the society. That is not only ironic and so unfortunate; but also the very motivation behind this paper.

For easy understanding of the content of communication in the paper, and to restore any possible ambiguous conceptions about the paper, it calls for the necessity to make contextual clarifications of certain terms adopted by the paper.

- *Education* simply refers to as 'the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at a school or university' or 'an enlightening experience' or 'the process of teaching and learning aimed at having the intellect/mind of a learner brushed or enlightened'. It is Latin originated *educare* which means 'to train or to mold' or *educere* meaning 'to lead out of' ignorance or illiteracy into enlightenment. This implies that the educational process leads one out of one's former self into a new self: more knowledgeable, more skilled, wiser, and more experienced' (<https://en.m.wiktionary.org>).
- *Educatedness* as used here simply means 'the state of being educated', or the state of having attended educated and impacted on it and allowing it impacting on you in turn. The term is broader than scholarship. Education is explained in three major taxonomies: cognitive where scholarship is contextually used in the paper, affective where the sense of humanism as used here prevails, and finally psycho-motor where skills and talents are groomed, and which can lead to entrepreneurial encouragement. By this, education could be referred to as encyclopaedic process. Ngwoke and Ugwu have also their own conception of education:

The primary purpose of education is to instil in learners, the capacity for transformation of the society. This is because education is needed to resolve the difficulties of a particular moment in history and the interpretation of its attendant aspirations, values and concerns. Hence education should capacitate learners and human persons to reflect on themselves, their roles and responsibilities in the culture and society they find themselves. Education institutes the courage in the student to discuss problems that characterize their immediate environment and to critically intervene in issues that arise in such environment rather than subjecting their senses of selfhood at the mercy of the decisions of others. Education is also meant to create in learners, the disposition to constantly re-evaluate and project analysis to findings, to appropriate processes and methods that are scientifically oriented, and to see themselves as existing in a dialectical relationship with their social reality (Ngwoke and Ugwu 2022, 40-4).

In the concept of education, the concept of humanism is an integral part. But the lack of the concept of humanism from the concept of scholarship is the problem the paper sets out to address.

- *Scholarship* as used in this paper implicates the idea of ‘academic study or achievement, learning at a high level’ or ‘the character, qualities or achievements of a scholar’ or the state of being a scholar or exercising ‘scholar-hood’. It designates that formal academic intellectual exercise strictly observed in an academic environment and as structured in the Western form. It implicates the idea of learning process; and could be likened to the concept of erudition, or those learning exercises structured for people to go through them and get mastery of the applied and theoretical knowledge of that discipline. Comparatively, while education could take the form of informality and even outside an academic institution, scholarship is exercised only in a formal form and in an academic environment.
- *Scholar* imports the picture of ‘a specialist in a particular branch of study’ or ‘a person who is highly educated or has an attitude for study’. Suffice it to say therefore that one who has gone through the process and exercise and got the expertise or mastery of the knowledge in the discipline could now be referred to as a learned one, an erudite or encyclopaedia, a scholar or one who is educated. A significant feature of scholarship is that it is a process through which one’s intellect gets purified and sharpened. The intellect, that is, the mind, or the cognitive faculty of human beings to grasp, perceive and interrogate the perceived or grasped and then have a reasonable understanding, and comprehension of the perceived/grasped. A scholar has had his intellect brushed to not only see far and see beyond the immediate, but also to proffer solutions to the future. A scholar mostly sees with his/her intellect, not ordinarily the eye, for the eye can give inaccuracy most times. A scholar, an erudite or encyclopaedia or a learned or educated person becomes an expert in knowledge, at least, in that particular area of

academic specialization or discipline. Suffice it therefore to say that an educated or a scholar is an expert who is expected to show the way to the good having attained, as expected, the end product of scholarship/education which is knowledge. But this level is at the mastery level with licentiate; when scholarship goes beyond mastery certification to Doctorate certification, it is expected of the scholar to become an intellectual doctor to cure ignorance, at least from the area of specialization or discipline. When it goes from doctorate certification to professorial certification, it therefore implies that the professor has become a genius who not only holds a mastery intellectual capability to a great average in every aspect of intellectual discipline, but also to cure ignorance with exceptional remarks, or expertise more than an academic doctor could do. A scholar professionally is one with the intellectual capacity to not only cure intellectual sickness— ignorance, but also direct people to the right way to the good. The technicalities in scholarship have a lot to do with the faculty and concept of intellect and its nominalization which all give a more insight into the central term under discussion here, ‘scholarship’.

- *Intellect* is used here to point to ‘the faculty of reasoning and understanding objectively, especially with regard to abstract matters’.
- *Intellectual* as employed here means ‘a person possessing a highly developed intellect’.
- *Intellectualism* is ‘the exercise of the intellect at the expense of the emotions’. Philosophically speaking, it is ‘the theory that knowledge is wholly or mainly derived from pure reason’. From a rationalistic consideration, it is ‘the ability to think about or discuss a subject in a detailed and intelligent way, without involving your emotions or feelings’.

This juncture, what is then the meeting point of these terms? Education as a concept and process intrinsically inheres the sense of humanism following its affective perspective; but scholarship as used here pictures the critical and logical knowledge got from education hence represented in the cognitive perspective. Scholars are referred to as intellectuals because what makes them such is the fact (assumption?) that their intellects, cognitive faculties have been enlightened. Thus, while the concept of scholarship here pictures being educated at head; education pictures being educated at head and also at heart. The problem with scholarship as contextualized in the paper is that it does not centralize humanitarian affection (humanism) in dealing with human beings, as seen in the definition of ‘intellectualism’ above. Consequently, in a country like Nigeria, it has inculcated in the minds of the educated, only one aspect of education: value for abstract, scholarly engagement and ideologies, instead of combining these with humanitarian affections as should be seen in their attempts to develop human being, and have a good human-human relationship. The seeming less conscious of this fact has deterred the student/lecturer relationship, and the students and the country at large pay heavily for this (Ugwu and Ozoemena, 2019_a, 9-40; Ugwu and Ozoemena, 2019_d, 133-

43). While the educated could be likened to teachers who not only direct and engage learners both academically, intellectually and scholarly, but also affectionately and humanely; scholars could be likened to lectures who focus only on academic performance or excellence. This is a reason behind the quick and full focus on the enquiry, 'what academic/scholarly achievements have you attained for applying for promotion in the university system' instead of adding to the enquiry 'and how many learners/students have you groomed, and what is their behavioural rate in the society'. So, guide would then be like, 'publish papers and get promoted to professorship and then live in such abstractive life where only scholarship and its characteristic attitudes of being logical, maintaining critical thinking and living a disciplined and principled life which aligns with the tenets of being a scholar, rule supreme. Epistemologically, and as here contextualized, generally, it could be said that scholarship imports the idea of knowledge only, while education combines both knowledge and wisdom. Thus, it follows that people guided by the tenets of scholarship as narrated here are half educated, and incomplete hence problematic or imbalanced. Discussions in many sources maintain a supportive stand to this position (Ugwu, 2022, 174; Ugwu and Asuquo 2022, 99-101).

It is on this point that it calls for the necessity to bring in philosophy as not just an academic science, but also a mother science, on board. As a mother, any discourse on intellectualism has to revolve around philosophy for two reasons: (1) It is the mother science from where every other science as an independent discipline is created. (2) It is in philosophy that the two accused tools of intellectualism (logicality and criticality) which have brought about the irony, and inhumanism that the paper laments about, are found fundamental. Considering the first reason, that is why the Doctoral certification of any discipline is a respect to philosophy as its mother science. Doctoral certification is referred to as Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Considering the second reason, already, logic is a branch of philosophy, critical thinking is a philosophical course or exercise, and in fact a central feature of philosophical exercise. In other words, the onus of this paper revolves around philosophy and the act of philosophizing pictured in terms of scholarship/education hence the title could be structured, on second thought, thus: philosophy without humanism is as dangerous as illiteracy, or a philosopher without (consciousness of the practicality of) humanism is as dangerous as an illiterate with his/her illiteracy effects. This is because an illiterate is already limited to certain evil and devilish knowledge, s/he only carries out the ones s/he knows, but a literate, scholar who has been exposed to much knowledge from many human endeavours and disciplines and has grasped the knowledge of them can by his/her one expertise act, clear up the whole community of human beings.

However, an attempt to distinguish between scholarship and philosophy is necessary. While scholarship revolves around sharpening the intellect through academics, philosophy is not necessarily scholarship-dependent. Philosophy as a concept here is a pointer to wisdom and its exercise for human welfare. Philosophy, by formality and scholarship, is an academic

discipline that deals with critical and logical thinking from a formal perspective on one hand. But on the other hand, it is an exercise of the natural wisdom in human beings. By this nature, even one who is not academically and formally literate could still philosophize hence it deals with wisdom and its exercise. While scholarship needs wisdom and philosophy to strengthen its tentacles, philosophy from its natural state perspective needs education to broaden or extend the tentacles of natural wisdom and make it more balanced especially as it concerns modern aspects of life as obtainable in today's world. But by the naturality of wisdom that underlines philosophy, one does not necessarily require to go to school or undergo academic processes before attaining philosopher-hood, but one has to necessarily undergo scholarship before attaining scholar-hood. While wisdom is deeper than scholarship or intellectualism, it cannot deny entirely requiring educatedness for a more balanced life.

3. Expectations from scholarship and scholars

Scholarship is the programmed academic exercise through which one goes and becomes intellectually sound. It is all about the academic process and procedures structured for learners to undergo through for professional acclamation of certain knowledge in and of certain disciplines and areas in life. It entails all those exercises, engagements and interactions one passes through so as to have one's intellect watched off ignorance. It is all about the process of curing intellectual sickness, rejection of intellectual blindness, wastage of life. On extension, scholarship, through dialogical participation, inculcates in learners the following qualities: curiosity, critical thinking, ability to communicate well and understandably, radicalism, reawakening of freedom consciousness and self-affirmation, among other qualities (Ngwoke and Ugwu 2022, 41-3).

A scholar is one who undergoes the scholarly processes and structured academic exercise, and has, by expectation, acquired all the necessary knowledge that would guarantee him/her bearing or sharing in that status 'scholar' or even 'learned'. Anyone who has been scholarly drilled under an academic exercise and structuralized procedures is expected to have acquired certain level of knowledge that would qualify him/her to proudly, and with defence-capacity, answer a scholar or learned colleague.

All these highlighted qualities and by formality, are the characteristics of a scholar. By professional expectations, s/he should see beyond immediacy by thinking beyond his/her nose. S/he should be an icon to be looked upon and emulated, s/he should be an epitome of the way to the good, s/he leads others to the environment of right judgment. S/he should be an epitome of social value as provable by his/her behaviours. S/he should be a custodian of what right symbolizes. S/he should picture what light stands for. His/her opinions are, by expectation, appealing to even ordinary senses. S/he should symbolize what humanism, both as an intellectual exercise and human-feeling (being humane), stands for. Just as women are eulogized as *odozi aku* (wealth-organizers/lovers), scholars/intellectuals should not only show in their attitudinal

disposition the *odozi aku* (wealth organizers/gatherers) status, but also *odozi obodo* (community-organizers/lovers) status. Scholars here refer to ‘teachers’ and not ‘lecturers’; *ndi-nkuzi* (those who involve themselves in teaching others). *Nkuzi* etymologically is Igbo, meaning ‘beating something to have a particular right shape’ implying that scholars as teachers shape and sharpen others (who learn from them) to the socially desired attitude, right thinking and speaking. How it is levied upon women to put their family in good and well-ordered shape, so is it upon scholars to fashion the relevant reasonable manner and a way to organize the society to be human-friendly first of all, and to encourage positive activities from other aspects of life. His/her lifestyle expressed through words, thought and actions ought to stand for anti-inhumanism. His/her actions and intellectual prowess is expected to gear towards sustaining human welfarism, not inhumanity through anti-humanistic thinking strategy and postulations as seen in certain theories, policies, or philosophies of life. These and many more are the fundamental expectations of a scholar. But the question is: are these expectations the outcomes?

4. On the concept of humanism as depicting of an ethical category

To start this section, it will be good to make a presentation of an understanding of the concept, ‘humanism’. The term ‘humanism’ is derived from the root word, ‘human– humanity’ as against the being of animals, trees, gods, or even the Supreme Being, among other realities. It therefore conceptually places more value on human beings in terms of rationality, morality and affection, than other beings. As a concept, ‘humanism’ is vague, but two senses of interpreting it would be suitable here. In the first sense, humanism implies ‘a system of thought that considers that solving human problems with the help of reason is more important than religious beliefs’. Here, human beings are conceived more rational in nature. In the second sense, ‘it depicts the fact that the basic nature of human is good’, hence here portrays the ‘theo-nature’ of man as a product of the ‘Good’– *imago Dei*. Drawing from this is the affectionate nature of the human being (Ugwu and Ozoemena 2019, 34). Buttressing more on these two senses therefore, as a school of thought and a philosophical movement, it emphasizes the primacy of the human reasoning and autonomy in explaining and finding solutions to the problem of man. As an approach in philosophy that detests a theistic explanation of phenomenon, it gained prominence during the renaissance period. It is a progressive philosophy of life that, without theism or other supernatural beliefs, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfilment that aspire to the great good (American Humanist Association. <http://americanhumanist.org>).

Humanism affirms human inherent capacities to confront life challenges, to provide answers to life puzzles and to lead a good and happy life without necessarily depending on the revelations and dictates of a God or deity or even the principles of the human intellect. The Human-centredness as against a deity-centeredness or even the intellect-guard lifestyle, of humanist orientation depicts of an ethical perspective that

would also be human-centred; hence, the prompting and the inclination in humanist ethicists to project an ethical perspective that uphold the primacy of the dignity and utmost worth of the human being. Felix Adler, an ardent proponent of a humanist ethics emphasized the indispensability of the ultimate worth of the human being as an ethical quality when he writes that “the ethical quality called worth is the supreme good, and must be accessible to all, even to those to whom the lesser goods are denied” (Adler 1918, 102). The ultimate worth of human beings, so spoken about, entails that the human being is accrued an intrinsic value and not an instrumental value; it demands that every human being is treated as an end in itself and not as a means to an end. Hear Adler on this position;

we need hardly again remind ourselves that this conception of worth, or of man as end *per se*, is not a mere abstraction, and that our interest in it is not academic. Every outcry against the oppression of man by man, or against whatsoever is morally hideous, is but the affirmation of the cardinal principle that a human being as such is not to be violated, is not to be handled like a tool, but is to be respected and revered as an end *per se* (1918, 103-104).

The foregoing contention accentuate the primacy of the respect for every human entity irrespective of logicity and criticality as expressed in the academic levels in our social relationships; and this ethical humanist position of Adler can also stand as a point of dialogue between the disposition of humanism and that of intellectualism. The intellect through ratiocination reveals to us the qualities inherent in every being which determines how we ought to act towards it (human beings inclusive). With reason, the human being exercises control over his/her animal and rational nature; hence s/he is aware of an inner urge, the command of duty to act in ways that are especially humane as s/he “recognizes that other human beings are endowed with the same rational nature as he is, and that certain modes of conduct are due to them” (Njoku 2007, 39). These modes of conduct due to other human beings are summarily articulated by Adler as constitutive in recognizing and appreciating the intrinsic value inherent in all human beings. In addition, as noted by Messner, these moral codes which are products of moral ratiocination are immediately brought to his awareness by the conscience, which approves, disapproves, advises, warns, urges, impedes, praises, blames, and summons on powerful emotions when it makes a retrospective judgment on decision regarding conduct in the context of good and evil (1965, 15). Herein lies the dialogue of humanism as expressed in the verdict-giving role of the emotion and intellectualism as expressed in the moral-premises-producing role of the intellect; hence, rationality becomes a category that is applicable to the moral sphere.

Furthermore, the dialogue of humanism and scholarship has before now been conceived on a context where the universe is seen as a manifold composed of inter-dependent, inter-related and complementary factors (Adler 1918, 125). Scholars/intellectuals, in their bids to excel in their various fields of endeavour, ought to be inclined towards solving problems that either directly or indirectly affect human beings; hence the primary role of scholars/intellectuals is the

enhancement of humanity as Adler reiterates that “the task of uplifting the lower people will never be successfully prosecuted until it is seen to be part of the task of humanity in general, which is to spread the web of spiritual relations over large and ever larger province of the infinite realm” (Adler 1918, 340). This relationship further underscores what scholars refer to ‘Town and Gown’ relationship, which is “a type of relationship between tertiary institutions and host communities, which fosters growth and development through knowledge dissemination and capacity building projects” (Ogola-Emma and Amini-Philips 2021, 126-39). The relationship between scholarship and humanism is a ‘give and take’ relationship, in that while humanism provides the intellectuals with what to intellectualize about, the intellectuals/scholars must reciprocate by providing answers to the puzzles that confront humanity. It is a moral demand for praxis that is the blend between the theoretical, critical and abstract disposition of scholarship and that of the applicative, affective and concrete humanism.

The inter-play between scholarship and humanism within the context of a humanist ethic can be inferred from the role of the affective domain in Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objective which advances that scholars/intellectuals and student-scholars are developed on three domains– the cognitive, the affective and the psychomotor. In as much as the cognitive which is the critical-based and psychomotor which is the skill-based domains are important, the place of the affective domain in the realization of a complete scholar/intellectual cannot be overemphasized. The affective domain which denotes emotions and their outward expressions needs to be developed as a competence in scholars/intellectuals because they are useful in determining motives and states in others. Human beings are also biologically wired to consciously and unconsciously answer questions as they apply to other people. People notice the physical signs of distress in others, expressive facial movements, message of the voice, sign of happiness, anger or joy in their conversations with others (Brett, *et al.* 2003, 83-104). The human being is not just a thinking and emotional being, but also a social being who must consider the feelings of others in his/her actions towards them, and this also includes the “power of ideally appreciating others, of seeing them in the light of their possible best, and the feeling of love consequent on this vision as the mightiest lever for transforming evil into good, and for sweetening the embittered lives of man” (Adler 1918, 235). The affective domain as encapsulated in the social learning sphere, trains learners and scholars/intellectuals to recognize and manage emotions, care about others, make good decisions, behave ethically and responsibly, develop positive relationships, and avoid negative behaviour (Fredericks 2003, 1-14). As an implication, it connotes moral character development (Hoffman 2000). Hence, a justification for the usage of the phrase ‘found worthy in character and learning’ by Nigerian tertiary institutions while awarding certificates and degree to both their scholars/intellectuals and students.

5. The irony of scholarship through the scholarly displays by scholars

Scholarship is meant to shape man in mind, attitude, speech and thinking. The man whose mind is shaped in the process of scholarly engagements has to display the good which his/her mind has been exposed to, in the society. This could show through behaviours, speeches and thinking as could be expressed in theories and policies, or guides in life: all for human welfarism. Suffice it then to posit that any claim to scholarship should not start and end in papers of certification, on abstractism where the acclaimed scholar could think far, extract an idea and theorize very intellectually commendable. After all these formalities which portrays scholarship, the person has a home, has parents, has siblings, probably has children, has other relatives of extended families, has a kindred or village or town, the person is a human being who socializes with other people in religious, political gatherings, in economic hustling activities, etc. It is in his/her relationship in these pointed milieus that his/her scholarship would best be judged. The level of being able to maintain positive relationships among these milieus shows the level of his/her scholarship. In other words, scholarship is best explained in not just positive thinking, but most importantly, speeches and actions. When thinking is positive or average or even above average, and it is supported and reaffirmed in speeches and actions, then the entity from whose mental activity these proceed sounds human both in the abstract (mind-thinking) and displaceable (behavioural and speaking) forms. Scholarship should be seen, measured or gauged in not just thinking, but speeches and actions expressing emotion. Just as it is said elsewhere, “Any education [scholarship] that is devoid of morality is incomplete and useless. Such education [scholarship] is even harmful to both the individual who acquires it and the society in which he lives” (Ugwu and Ozoemena 2019_a, 24).

But the question today is: ‘Have all these been realized of those claiming scholarship?’ How has scholarship helped to shape in positivity, human relationship, and foster humanism among the community of human beings? How has human or humanism fostered education? How has education, through the acclaimed scholars/intellectual, who, expectedly, have got the end products of scholarship (intellectuality, sight in the brain, not in the eye), enhanced humanism among others? These are the essential questions of this paper because the position of the paper is that scholarship that is not human-focused, human-concerned, is not worthy to be recognized as truly one. Attaining a true scholarship is attaining those behavioural qualities that encourage the livelihood, sense of feeling human, of the other person around you, the scholar. Being a scholar is being a scholar fundamentally for human beings through ensuring human welfarism; it is not being a scholar for ideas, logical principles, life-strictness and to be seen and addressed as a hard man/woman or a principled or disciplined man/woman, and then being wicked and inhuman under the cloak of being a scholar with principle and discipline. To be a scholar is primarily for human gains through humanism– humane approach to fellow human beings both in thought, speech and action. Basically, being a scholar is not for the gods,

spirits, animals and other non-human beings; it is for encouraging humanism- both from the sense of being a human being, and from the sense of showing rationality as a distinct quality of being a human being. Hence, from the latter sense, the human-being-scholar should foster the former sense. Being educated is not to always think out ideas and live in abstractism; being a scholar could also be expressed through being in contact with reality, the existential reality of both yourself as a scholar, and that of the fellow human being.

Practically, the irony being referred to, here, has instances of its evidence, as it could be seen that there is a misconception of value in being a scholar. To many scholars, displaying scholarship is all there is in scholarship and more valuable than caring for any possible consequences (Ugwu and Ozoemena 2019_c, 146-58). It is a clear position, arguable though, that a greater percentage of the catastrophe human beings experience today is caused by the exercise or critical show of human scholarship which could rightly be called 'intellectualism'. Some theories propagated by some world-renowned scholars fundamentally encourage war or crisis when carefully analyzed. Some renowned scholars like Heraclitus, Empedocles, etc., would hold that progress is in the principle of opposition, where opposition implicates the idea of friction, and disagreement which could take various shapes when interpreted, to mean war or violent engagement (Ugwu and Ozoemena 2019_b, 37-8). Some political extremist theorists like Machiavelli, would even encourage extremism, killing of any opposition or any person questioning the exercise of the power of the ruler, provided political power and fame are enjoyed and retained at any rate. Some core materialists like Hobbes, Macintyre, Ryle, Baron d'Holbach, La Mettrie, etc., would hold an extremist materialist view that would damn the essence of being, and being human thereby encouraging inhumanity hence no vitalism is attached to being human. Pieces of literature, whether of religious or circular content, are products, manifestations of human intellectual exercise, and end products of scholarship, but they have encouraged troubles and inhumanism (Ugwu and Ozoemena 2019_b, 39-41). These are abstractive exercises of the intellect which take the products of the mind far away from reality, the existential realities of the people. Intellectual exercises, therefore, focus more on abstracts, ideas and ideals, than human welfare. That is a big detrimental loss of contact between scholarship and humanism- human empathy. While scholarship becomes more addicted to thinking about abstractism and ideas for intellectual superiority, it focuses less on the human being doing the thinking, and equally becomes adamant to any possible effect of the exercise on the human being undergoing the thinking. This challenge does not start and end with academic or circular theories and postulations; it is also there in many religious Scriptures of Christianity, Islam, etc. Even religion that one would think that following its central object as God and the whole idea of divine, it would encourage more consciousness of humanism. Pitifully, it does not, but rather ironically encouraged inhumanism and portrayed God as one who delights in bloodshed, no matter what the reason could be. However, apart from the fact that these scriptures are believed

to be documentation of what had happened centuries ago, they are all products of intellectual exercise of some people. Thus, what human beings possess as inherent nature, and which should be for the humanism of human beings, has turned so ironical that it has become a huge and influential source of inhumanism. That is the irony and the danger of the concept.

It is too ironical of scholarship that principles and logic have become the rule of life, not existential situations and the facticity of humanism as expressed in the beingness of humanity. Scholars today are unfortunately more logical and critical than humanistic. They live in more abstraction than real. They easily display this character when, for instance, in a group, a case of kidnap or death is announced, and the next post from such scholar/intellectual would be on a conference, workshop, etc. They have become too scholarly to the enslavement of their humanistic tendencies. They only think and keep thinking, never feel, even in the face of emotional incident. This has hampered full delivery of education in school management where students bear huge, unnecessary and inhuman consequences from their scholar-lecturers who no longer feel but always think (Ugwu and Ozoemena 2019_a, 20-2; Ugwu and Ozoemena 2019_d 133-43).

In fact, these have become the identifying factor of scholarship today. Life has become all about principles and philosophies, protocols and living logical and critical life. Not living in such lifestyle for these scholars, is fallacious, unwise, a sign of illiteracy and personality of not being a scholar. In an office, it is an official protocol and principle by a scholar occupying the office that even if you are dying, you must not near, let alone make use of his chair, even when he is not in the environment at all, or he is not in the office to make use of the chair. So, even resting or lining on the chair would bring your life back, you shall not try it because it is his scholarly protocol and principle in his office. Is this observing the protocols of scholarship or celebrating being a scholar, or celebrating the dryness of being a human (humanism)? In a law court, during a presidential electoral tribunal in Nigeria, a witness was presented to testify before an honourably court of competent jurisdiction. The presiding judge asked him how he was doing, the prospective witness responded that he was fine. And in the spirit of his African lifestyle, returned the welfare enquiry to the judge by saying 'and your', meaning 'how are you too?' the presiding judge ignored it saying, 'you are the one to answer questions here'. But the prospective 'illiterate' was humane enough and even happy to chat with him responding to his welfare enquiry, but reciprocating by returning the welfare enquiry to him to know how he was doing, it turned to show-of scholarship, being a logical and critical man after all, he was a lawyer, the almighty 'learned' man, and being learned is being logical, critical and fallacy-conscious especially in a court environment where logic and criticality are highly celebrated and stand as parameters of measurement.

6. Evaluation and Conclusion

In this section, the position of this paper would be made clearer as it would be evaluated and concluded. To some, it could be interpreted that the position argued for, here, is a typical of

fallacy: *Argumentum Misericordiam*, simply interpreted as an *Appeal to Pity*. But that is not it exactly. The position here is the advocacy that while thinking, feel. While exercising your scholarship, exercise your humanistic tendencies and remember that you are a human being and the fellow involved is also a human being. That may be conceived fallacious also! Let us ponder on this scenario. There is an image of a Japanese child carrying on his back, a lifeless body of his younger brother who was killed during a war in Japan. He was observed by a soldier, noticing that he was carrying an unnecessary burden (corpse) which has delayed his fast walking thereby risking his own life, the soldier advised him to throw away the 'burden' so he could walk fast for his safety. The little boy responded 'He is not heavy, he is my brother'. The soldier quickly understood and then burst into tears. Since then, the image has remained a symbol of unity in Japan. For many scholars, the fallacy is clear. Being heavy and to your detriment is different from being your brother; that is a typical reaction from a logical and critical thinking-mind. To the thinking-mind, you should throw away the dead body and run for your life, but to the feeling-heart, the brotherhood/relatedness is a value that must be cherished. In Igbo language, it is said that *ive nwanne anaghi eru n'okpukpo(okpukpu)*, meaning 'the anger against a brother/related does not reach to the bone(marrow)'. But a brother's anger is the most painful! But the aphorism is advising that the facticity of *nwanne/relatedness* or brotherhood should damn the pain. To many scholars today, these instances presented here are fallacious for they portray elements of illogicality, but to the humanist, the illogicality is the nucleus of humanism. Thus, the position of this paper is that in the logicity and criticality of your thinking-mind, ensure a balance with the feeling-heart so as to remain in touch with existential reality of the beings involved in the scholarly exercise displayed in your thinking-process.

Little wonder then irrationalism as an expression of humanism through emotions has been argued as an intrinsic part of the human being. Unamuno is a proponent of this position who holds that the irrationalism of the human being differentiates his existence from that of any other being, hence the human emotional nature, humanistic inclination, feeling and love are all imbedded in the human existential nature of irrationalism. For Unamuno, the human being is not a completely rational being, and based on that, human reason is limited and could not lay a sufficient claim of the knowledge of everything. Putting this straight, he upholds that man is only "man of flesh and bone" (1954, 151, 269, 312) hence finite, and the certainty of some knowledge beyond the capability of his/her mind to grab through reason. This position collaborates with Roubiczek's that "it is this violent, unreasonable, fundamentally irrational claim of reason... [that] in turn produces the violent and now openly irrational reaction of existentialism" (1966, 1). Same angle of perception follows Hume who holds that "reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them" (1969, 415). In humanism is irrationalism as characteristically expressed in emotionalism.

Scholarship should be more than living a logical and critical life. It ought to be more than a principled and disciplined lifestyle; after all, attaining scholarship is for fellow human beings, and for being more humane thereby encouraging humanism among the community of human beings. Scholarship has to be more than imbibing a lifestyle guided by logic and criticality. The principle of scholarship and being a scholar necessarily ought to align with the consciousness of humanism. Anything referred to scholarship more than this is a clear suspect of anti-humanism. This is a conception and interpretation of scholarship from an African perspective. From this position, it could be perceived therefore that the model and principle guiding the formal style of scholarship which has inculcated wickedness in most African scholars under the cloak of being a scholar and living a logical and critical life of discipline and principle, is of the Western understanding of scholarship and being logical and critical. An African perspective of logicity and scholarship opposes the Western conception and evaluation of what scholarship implicates. From an African perspective, being a scholar is incomplete without humanly demonstrating it. Scholarship to the African implicates what education as a concept means as analyzed above. It is being courageous to facilitate humanism and address human existential realities as expressed in challenges. From an African perspective of being logical and critical, humanism dialogues and mediates. The thinking-mind is not entirely separated from the feeling-heart unlike in the Western perspective. Joining the two in a Western conception is fallacious and improper, but this fallacy and improperness is the African logicity and criticality, and an exemplary show of an African scholarship. Thus, this paper presents a viewpoint or a conceptual scheme through which human beings could be conceived with more values, dignity and a sense of humanism. It attempts to postulate a more humanistic conceptual framework to broadly understand what an African scholarship, logicity and criticality could mean and imply. You do not have to think without feeling the thought/thinking, and its effects, starting from yourself. There are humanistic factors that are urgently worthy of consideration as to influence the existential reality of your thinking/thought on the human being involved, then your thinking being a dry conceptual land, and portraying criticality that possibly leads the human consciousness very far away from the human existential reality. This is expressed in the following logical presentation by Etuk:

If anyone cuts another person's palm fruits, then he will pay this fine.

S has cut another person's palm fruits.

But given the two premises, it does not follow that:

S must pay this fine;

Because the status of the person intervenes:

But S is a grandchild of this community.

Therefore, S will not pay this fine (2002, 112)

The truism of the principle of this logic is in its 'fallacy' (to a Western mind): "... the status of the person intervenes..." and this 'status' is that the defaulter represented as 'S' whom the logicity and criticality of the whole scenario would be caught to punish, "is a grandchild of this community." In the logicity

and criticality of the law, thinking worked, but in humanism and relatedness of law-subjects, feeling worked. If you apply thinking and its logicity and criticality and get everybody defaulted and killed, it will remain only you, and thinking and its workings, and they will not catch you defaulted and you alone will live with them. In other words, the paper proposes that in thinking, feeling should be an underlining factor for mediation. It is in thinking that humanism will now surface to prove and play its dual nature expressed in rationality, logicity and criticality on one hand, and feeling and its relatedness, on the other hand. Thus, the truism of such an African humanistic logic is in the fact that to think and to live are not enough to be; rather to think-and-feel and then live-together-with-the-other, are enough to be.

The humanistic inherency of the African person which has become a major African identity and personality make-up, has become the more why, the African is negatively conceived and his philosophy tagged 'ethno'. It was there in the socio-political humanistic ideology of the former Tanzanian president, Senghor when he said: "Emotion is Black as much as Reason is Greek," meaning that thinking is for the European while emotion is for the African. However, Senghor himself (1956, 202-3) has made his position clearer to weed off the misunderstanding attached to the expression. Other scholars have followed suit to clarify Senghor's position. Masolo (1995, 26), Oguejiofor (2005, 85-9), Ugwu and Asuquo (2022, 99-100). Generally, the point in emphasis here is that practice has to accompany theory. A good philosophy has to necessarily be seen presenting a blend, hybrid of theory expressed in the ideal (knowledge- scholarship), and practice expressed in the empirical (application- humanism).

In other words, it could be posited that scholarship ought to be for human development in both mind and heart. It should aim at developing the human being both ideally through critical and logical implications, and empirically through feeling towards the other in behaviour and speech. In the latter, one shows to the other how one is developed in the former, hence the dualistic development implies the entirety of the human being. This gets justification in Cooney's position that "Education (holistic and positive scholarship) is of the whole man" and this brings out the meaning in St. Cornelius' opinion that "if a man wants to be a man, he must be well educated" (Ugwu and Ozoemena 2019a, 9). Making it more emphatic, Omoregbe has held that:

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations; racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace (1993, 149-51).

From the above, it could be said that scholarship should concentrate on "the training of the entire person to enable him not only to be able to read and write and calculate or to be proficient in a given job" as was the colonial masters' main aim, "but also to enable him to fit himself for living in a society." Put differently that "if you wish to plan for a year,

sow seeds; if you wish to plan ten years, plant trees; if you wish to plan for a lifetime, develop men" through positive and holistic scholarship (education), and so "who so neglect learning in his youth loses the past and is dead for the future" (1999, 22). Scholarship ought to be interpretable, therefore, as human investment. "The importance of education (positive and holistic scholarship) can never be over emphasized for it brings out or nurtures up that 'natural consciousness' of morality and evil, naturally installed in a man" (Ugwu and Ozoemena 2019a, 10).

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