

« Pleading for scientific honesty »

Because of to the proliferation of attacks, denigration and the resurgence of negative comments on the Web, against scientific conferences and their organizers, it seemed useful to step back and make a humanist and philosophical analysis of these practices.

By yoga approach, we can discuss this subject with a more neutral and maybe “unusual” view.

What is wrong exactly with conferences, speakers and organizers?

On anonymous blogs, there are severe criticism, unflattering slurs, whether in the form or substance.

Some bad words are even relayed by members of the scientific community, and one could wonder for what purpose, and for what reasons?

So, what insights can be given to these actions?

1° What is to “make a judgment”?

Notion of judgment : Humans spend most of their time to comment such action, or to judge individual.

To judge is like

“closing a door without looking at what there is behind”.

To judge a priori, that a conference is " fake " is to deprive an open mind the opportunity to meet other colleagues, meet another way of thinking about science.

1° What is to “make a judgment”?

Moreover, to judge is to refer to criteria. However, no criteria are universal: they depend on social origins, history, and culture of every human group: that is good for one may be bad for another.

Therefore, expressing the idea that a conference is “bad” loses its substance; Who can give to oneself the right to judge if a conference is good or bad? For this, it should be very pretentious.

1° What is to “make a judgment”?

Furthermore, in terms of science, what can we say of a “scientist” who criticizes a conference, without ever having participated, who never read the proceedings, who refers to anonymous blogs, and who not explain the criteria that lead to its conclusion?

Can you give any credit to its claims?)

2° Mechanism of negative reviews and reasons for hitting

The humans say easily negative criticism on environment, on colleagues or on the work of others. What internal mental mechanism pushes a person to start this type of negative process?

Questioning the impact of pride, vanity, jealousy, ambition, fear, his "ego" frustrated or disproportionate, in our own mental way of minding is a good starting point.

By understanding the mechanism that drives deep to do so, humans gradually learn not to harm others and not harm oneself, according to the basic principles of yoga.

3° What is a “good” researcher?

- Is he the best academic specialist, knowledgeable in his field?
- Or the one able to explain clearly to everyone the content of his work?

But, who is the “most deserving”?

Anyone who has substantial financial support, big team and expensive modern equipment or those who work without any technical means?

Has the work of one more value than the work of the other?

It would be very pretentious to state it.

3° What is a “good” researcher? (Cont’)

- Who is the “best” researcher?
 - The one who puts his name on dozens of papers per year without even having written one?
 - The one who wrote and published by himself alone after a hard work?
 - The one who wins the most financial contracts?
 - The one whose impact factor is the greatest?
 - The one who publish to satisfy his need for recognition, personal ambition, or to be well seen from his superiors?
 - ***The one who publishes his work with humility ensuring that it serves the common goals and for the welfare of humanity, remembering French writer F. Rabelais ?***

3° What is a “good” researcher? (Cont’)

There is no right or wrong researchers. We all seek for something, with our means, our qualities, our hopes, our culture, and all of us contribute in our own way to the philosophical reflections that make our scientific world.

4° What is a "good" paper?

- The one who allows the authors to satisfy their need for promotion and recognition?
- The one who is full of equations but incomprehensible to the majority?
- Or, the one who is trying to serve the common goal, to provide answers to the problems and questioning of humanity?

Whatever the definition of a good paper, to read or to listen to the authors with an open mind is a source of enrichment and we always learn something of the human who is in front of us.

5 ° What is a "good" reviewer?

- Whoever, in its comments, flatters the "ego "of the author?
- Whoever blocks and delays the paper of direct competitor" to publish his own paper first to ensure the anteriority of discovery?
- Whoever calls for improvements to the author to make the publication more explicit, more precise?
- Whoever is humble and says he cannot review when the subject is out of its field?

With this "biodiversity" of reviewers, we learn every time the operating system and practices of each other . In this, all reviewers are interesting.

6° What is a good conference?

- The one that requires huge registration fees and tie-wearing participants that takes place in a luxury hotel?
- The one who stands in a tourist place?
- The one with the largest number of participants?
- The one that has the highest rate of rejection of paper?
- The one who brings money to the organizer?
- The one which is the most diverse and inexpensive and that allows mixing and exchange of knowledge ?
- The one that is local and smaller to reduce its carbon footprint?

There is no right or wrong conferences, there are different conferences. All have their place and interest. Let each one to find its place.

7 ° What is a “good” participant?

- Whoever sending text messages and e- mails during the presentation of a colleague ?
- Whoever is curious, asks many questions at the end of the presentation?
- Whoever listens to the presentation with respect of his colleagues?
- Anyone who takes advantage of his trip to open its eyes and discover some of the country, the city, which is hosting the conference?

The behavior of each reflects our society. Just note, without judging.

8 ° Impact factor and true impact?

Do not confuse our well known impact factor -the academic evaluation system- with the real impact of a publication.

Is the quality of a work measured by the number of a paper citations or by its impact on the preservation of the planet?

9 ° Internet and the effects of globalization

Internet facilitates the exchange and access to information. The network allows almost instantaneous transmission of millions of information. But, it is also a powerful tool for all actors of the world economic war. Information, misinformation, against information, are formidable weapons. Thus, how to sort what is the useful information, the manipulation, the destabilization attempt?

Everything is “good” to capture new market share, in particular for the “business” of international conferences organization.

Great vigilance is required. To emit doubt about the received information -in the scientific sense-, to check the sources and especially independence of the sources is certainly an interesting approach to implement.

10 ° STOP to sterile and negative reviews

By understanding that to spread negative thoughts harm others and thus to oneself, (that yoga enthusiasts know for millennia and that neurosciences are just beginning to discover), by cultivating altruism and respect, each can contribute to improve the well-being of all.

12 ° Can I define what the scientific honesty is?

I will be careful, because if I give a definition, it would be with my own criteria. And I would be presumptuous to believe that my concept of honesty is the only one, good, unique and universal.

However, starting to think about our own mental functioning, our relationship with the environment, and how grows negative feelings, aggressiveness, hypocrisy, malicious gossip, is probably an interesting area to explore.