



The Defense of Rejneesh's Idea of Inconsistency in Scholars: The Rejection of Rigidity in Academia

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ABSTRACT

Although it is the nature of the world that things always change except the change itself, some scholars have become ideological in the strife for consistency. Some scholars take their ideas as sacred to the effect of sticking by them even when they are no longer sufficiently defensible. This fear of being inconsistent has crept even into the minds of scholars. Bagwan Rejneesh, an Indian philosopher who was always comfortable with changing and embracing change became vital as an advocate of thought development. This defense presents the necessity of being not resistant to change due to what one has held before. There has been a contradiction within the academic thoughts projected by some scholars. The center of the contradiction stems from scholars' arguments for evolution and transformation while at the same time, they worry about being always consistent. Therefore, this paper does not advocate thought anarchy, but it is set forth to logically defend the rejection of consistency when it no longer holds or is even defensible. This attitude of academics with sacred thoughts/ ideas happens to be utterly destructive within the academic sphere where progressive teaching and learning pedagogies must be taken into consideration. Not only that the academics themselves will benefit if they embrace a necessary change but also the students will benefit from the progressiveness and non-ideological teaching of their teachers/ lecturers. In my view, it seems very important that at some time academics rationally accept the change of times and accept that their ideas lack sacredness and universal eternity. Having this understanding of academic rationality, I wish to put forth some skeptical views of Bagwan Rejneesh with regard to ideological ideas that claim sacredness even when they have become obsolete.

Keywords: Ideological, Consistency, Defense, Contradictions, decolonization

INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of time till now there was never an existence of a being that is fit to be granted the status of "a universal human". Every person's thought is a collection of historicized and individuated ordinary experiences (Eze, 2008), except if one wants to claim the improbable. However, some people have made serious attempts to portray their thoughts as if they were sacrosanct and universal. Such scholars may include David Hume, Immanuel Kant,

Wilhelm George Hegel, David Manning, and many others that I will talk about in this paper. In this paper, I defend the idea of ordinary reason as the truthful interpretation of human reasoning rather than the superficial interpretation of human reason as a universal or sacred supernatural phenomenon. Within the paradigm of critical thinking and analysis as centered within the critical theory I set forth to defend transformative and transforming ways of thinking that truthfully present the human

state of nature. I seek to critically analyze academic misrepresentations of some thoughts as well as their indefensibility. At the end I will then suggest a 'chameleon metaphor' as a tool or a perspective that scholars could adopt and use when it comes to a truthful representation of their thoughts. As the aim is to create teachable educators, I wish this research to shed some light on how teachers should view themselves and portray their thoughts to those whom they teach. According to Crater et al (2021) an educator who allows the change of his/ her ideas to change over time as he/she learns from/ and with the students is a teachable educator. Therefore, in this study, a teachable educator is the one who keeps his/ her mind open to new ideas even if they threaten to change his/ her initial ideas.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is committed to the analytical school of thought. According to McGinn (2002) analytical philosophy emphasizes clarity and argument, which is commonly attained through logical and linguistic analysis. Gottlob Frege (1906) is considered as the father of analytical philosophy, a tradition that emphasizes on clarity of argument through the logical use of language in presenting thoughts. Within this framework, Bertrand Russell found a space to argue for logicism and logical atomism (Soames, 2003). According to Soames (2003) Logicism and logical atomism refers to the practice of breaking the argument into basic propositions in order to understand how coherent are those components that comprise the whole. Similarly, Hallen and Sodipo (1997) argue for the analytical breakdown of issues to simpler and logical thoughts through the use of logic in simple ordinary language. Soames (2003) seems to hold a view that philosophical problems arise from a misunderstanding of language and that all necessary truths are a priori, analytic, and

true in virtue if the meaning of words depends upon how the world truly is. Analytic theory helps in producing philosophy that is not ideologically motivated but thought that is analytic and reflective (Hallen, 2005). Under Wittgenstein's (1937) inspiration, Carnap (1961) sought to embed his analysis in logical positivism as a development of this tradition. Logical positivism holds that there are no specific philosophical truths and that the object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts (Soames, 2003). Carnap (1937) and other scholars contributed to this tradition by rejecting the doctrines of their predecessors of constructing artificial language to resolve philosophical problems. According to Glock (2008: 44) philosophers like Carnap collectively argued that the Vienna Circle was erroneous because the "quest for systemic theories of language worked as a misleading intrusion of scientific methods into philosophy".

The analytic framework in this research study helps in acquire a profound or adequate understanding of the research problem prior to forwarding my own views. Since it is the framework that guides me in my methodology, it also helps in the application of critical analysis that is reasonably safe from any biases. This theoretical framework enables a researcher to be reflective and at the same time be within guards of rationality while being critical of his thoughts. With the guide of logical positivism and criticality of thought, I have been able to deal with incoherencies and ideological speculations around the issues of both human existence and teaching philosophy while operating as a neutral being who is interested in learning more about philosophy and education. As Soames (2003) argued logical positivism holds that there are no absolute philosophical truths, but the object of philosophy is to clarify thoughts, this has helped me to simplify my thoughts. In this paper, I committed to the use of

ordinary language in producing my critical thoughts while at the same time analyzing the common thoughts that are currently existing in the public domain. The analytic framework is adequately relevant when dealing with critical issues like this one of philosophy in education because many people talk about these issues at a peripheral level and never get deeper into the rationality and core of what makes a rational philosophy of education.

METHODOLOGY

Different works of Osho Bhagwan Shree Rejneesh have been critically studied. A collection of 30 lecture videos, 6 documentary interviews, and a series of Osho Bhagwan Rejneesh's teachings were included in the conceptualization of this study. These sources mainly focus on Rejneesh's philosophy as an Indian classical philosopher who began the anti-religion movement of Sanyasin, a form of a 'cult' that got expelled in India due to the accusations that they perpetrate chaos and governmental instability. Since this is a desktop conceptual research, the sources available in the public domain have been the only usable data which helped in understanding the whole life and teachings of Rejneesh. The ethics of academic research have been adhered to in a form of acknowledging all sources used through academic referencing. All sources acknowledged in this study have been studied and analyzed in order to find main ideas and interpretations of Rejneesh's thoughts.

In studying these sources, three levels of interpretations have been adopted; (a) textual interpretation which analyzes the words as they appear in a text or uttered by a speaker, (b) contextual interpretation which analyzes the context or purport within which particular statements have been written or spoken, (c) subjective interpretation which analyzes the ideas with regards to relevance in the contemporary era. Subjecting all these sources to these levels of interpretation helps

to find the core of Rejneesh's within the logical scrutiny that is free from any biasness that risks tempering with the main thought. After having Rejneesh's thoughts analyzed, this study also used 10 academic articles written by African scholars about decolonization. The use of these 10 articles was meant to help in marking the relevance of Rejneesh's thoughts about scholars' consistency in nowadays struggle against coloniality and colonialism.

FINDINGS

Firstly, this study found that some scholars find themselves having taken their ideas as sacrosanct and not subject to review. Secondly, this study found that it is undeniably discomfoting in some scholars to learn from/ with their students as that threatens to challenge the very ideas within which their own identity is formed. Thirdly, some scholars talk and write about decolonization without understanding that it demands change of thoughts to the level that it demands openness to new ideas and ways of teaching. Fourthly, while consistency overtime seems desirable, it sometimes hinders progressive learning, transformation, and may give rise to perpetration of obsolete thoughts that completely lack relevance.

Analysis

According to Packer (1973) it is commonly heard in religious studies that somebody received an objectively true knowledge through prophecy. By definition, prophecy in religious settings is believed to be some piece of information from the supreme being which is meant to enlighten all human beings in the world (Fomum, 1990). The idea is that since the knowledge in that case descends from the supreme being who is omniscient and omnipresent it is then not subject to any limitation (Okeke, 2019). At this point there is no denial to the claim that the supreme being can have a superlative

cognition that goes beyond individuality, historicity, and geographically envired experiences. However, the argument here is that scholars are not like the supreme being and none of them get some revelations or God's inspirations when writing their academic thoughts. Hence, I argue that there was never a universal person, and it is alarming when some scholars present their thoughts in a way that seems to claim eternity and universality. Among those scholars who present their thoughts as universal, I would count David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Wilhelm George Hegel, David Manning, and others. Those scholars seem to have believed that they are some kinds of universal persons who then emit universal and eternal thoughts. Before delving into their thoughts, I deem it proper to bear in mind that I do not only intend to deal with what they said, but I intend to also analyze their presentation critically in literature. At last, I wish to delve into what the thought and its presentation portray about the author himself.

David Hume wrote "On National Characters" where he argued that Negroes are naturally inferior to the white race (Hume, 1825). He defended the writing of that essay to the level of uttering some derogatory words against Professor James Beaty who took a stand to question him about some extremes he seems to be committing in the presentation of his thoughts (Mosley, 2017). Immanuel Kant came later to corroborate Hume in his writings when he wrote that there was never a developed race that nature has witnessed other than the white race (Kant, 2013). Both these scholars considered their thoughts to be somehow universal and eternal in the sense that they present them as if they are objectively definitive of existence itself. The sacrosanct nature of these views to their authors can be seen in the compulsive force of their presentation at the time they wrote them. According to Hunter (2019) many scholars approach the analysis of these

thoughts during the discussions on the topic of race, inferiority complex versus superiority complex of some races over other races. But in this paper, I take a different angle than that of race philosophy and racism discussions. I set forth to talk about thought as human thought and thought presentation as ordinary and limited rather than being universally eternal. It is understandable that due to some academic authority, someone might develop some arrogance which then makes him/ her thoughts remain forever and unchallenged by the world's changes. I hereby argue that such kind of thinking is not only untrue, but it is also rationally indefensible.

Honesty in thought

An honest philosopher would voice out his/their views in a way that shows some consideration of the fact he/ she is an individual human being whose thoughts are affected by factors like time, space, and environment. In arguing for this view of honesty I take with gravity Leigh's (2015) views that honesty should be the basic garment of every human being who needs to make it in the world. I hold on to that view because I also believe that for any person to be understood it is always better to be understood for the truth of what they are as their true self. The word "naturally" in Hume's statement seems to suggest that his views hold as long as nature stands. The kind of presentation seems to have much force of rigidity than flexibility at any time. At any time when one reads such a thought, s/he can see how much the author was unwilling to change his views. This is the same with Kant's words, when one reads Kant's writings on race it is easy to see that he viewed his ideas as universal rather than being simply ordinary views of a limited human being. It is my view that honesty in scholars should dictate the above wishful thinking because there is some level of

falsehood that creeps in when a scholar starts to present his wishful thinking as truth. In this case truth is an honestly presented idea or statement which factually presents what is or what happened as it happened (Shaw, 2014). According to Smith (2015) truth does not include the wishes of the presenter, an honest interpreter will always be conscious of his limitations and the changing world in which things happen. Another commonly ignored truth is that truth itself changes over time (Lyons and Coyle, 2016). I concur with Lyons and Coyle, in that truth itself changes because of changes in the world situations, and it is within that ambit that Heraclitus argued that the only constant thing in the world is change itself (Sotemann, 2008). In light of all that, it is then arguable that scholars like Hume, Kant, Hegel, Manning were very much concerned about consistency in their thoughts than rationality and honesty.

An honest philosopher will know that his/ her duty is to think, analyse thoughts, and present thoughts as pure as they are. According to Finkelberg (2017) those thoughts will surely be shamelessly envisaging all his/ her limitations as an ordinary human being. A progressive thinker is the one who is open to challenging views without getting upset and resort to vulgar or any form of unnecessary defensiveness. A scholar that protects his thoughts to the level of granting them some level of universality becomes more of a thought dictator than a liberal thinker. According to Kreeft (2002) it is known from Socratic teachings that a teacher who does nothing best than imposing his thoughts to the students is not a good teacher. Peterson (2011) agrees with Kreeft (2002) in his argument that once a person portrays himself/ herself as absolutely knowing s/he blocks the possibility of himself getting to really be knowing. Socrates declared himself as a man who knows nothing except that very fact that he knows nothing (Kreeft, 2002). In my view a

teacher who is that open to declare himself as unknowing does not only open himself/ herself to a wide learning and honesty, but s/he also protects himself from being a thought dictator. Although Magrini (2018) Argues that Socrates declaration of being unknowing was some sort of a mockery against sophists I view it as some way of declaring to the world that he is always willing to learn. The important thing about being open to learning is that a scholar gets to be updated and is always transformed into being more of a progressive thinker. As a result of that humility, thinkers like Socrates easily learn life as nature unfolds it with calmness and acceptance of their ordinary nature of existence.

Within that idea of an ordinary calm being that accepts its existential state as being ordinary and limited I take solace in the teachings of Osho Bhagwan Rejneesh, one of the classical Indian philosophers of enlightenment. Unlike other philosophers of enlightenment, Bhagwan Rejneesh made it his mission to never comfort anyone with objective and unchallenged claims (OSHO International, 2020). According to Bhagwan Rejneesh (OSHO International, 2020) any human being becomes beautiful when s/he accepts himself as s/he is, other than thinking of himself/ herself as that which s/he is not. It seems that Rejneesh was being confronted by many experiences of some thought dictators some of whom even claimed some divine revelations. Krishnamurti (2009) narrates that at an early age Rejneesh believed in questioning all ideas until there is no more thing to question about them before believing in them. At the same time, McComack (2018) argues that it was always difficult to ascertain which side of thought does Rejneesh follow because he was never afraid of changing at any time he deems fit to change. Gayatri (2018) argues that it was always difficult to be Rejneesh's student because one would never be certain of what direction does he

want his students to take. Bhagwan Rejneesh himself said “many times you [referring to his students] have been consoled and commanded on what to believe and do, but myself I am to tell you that believe and do nothing except seeking true knowledge” (OSHO International, 2018). In my view scholars like Rejneesh are open-minded thinkers who accept their limited nature and present their views with full consideration of the fact that they are limited ordinary beings. That acceptance of the self makes a thinker beautiful in the sense that it shows freedom from self-deception and saves students from the manifestations of a thought dictator. In this perspective, a thought becomes beautiful when it is honestly presented in a way that is conscious of its time, space, and natural limitations that fully grasp its ordinary nature.

Bhagwan Rejneesh argues that when a philosopher gets much concerned about the consistency of his/ her thoughts s/he then becomes not only irrational but horrible to engage with (OSHO International, 2018). It becomes a horrible endeavor to engage with him/ her because of his obsession with manipulation, standardization, and generalization as that is a nature of positivists (Smythe, 1992). According to Detlef Von Daniels (2004) those qualities are core reasons why it was proper to reject positivism as an educational philosophy and grant it outdated. A philosopher's thought should be scholastically defended with absolute scrutiny against indefensible wishful desires and prejudices. Rejneesh argues that thought should not only be transformative, but it must also be ready to transform itself when or if situations change due to the effects of time, space, and understanding. In this paper I want to make it clear that understanding of a particular idea also evolves or transforms over time as the ordinary word changes. Charles Sotemann (2008) argues that as human population evolves over the ages, idea

also change greatly, sometimes what has been the truth in the past generation becomes entirely false in the next generation. For instance, in the early 80's being homosexual was a taboo to such an extent that it was normal to frown at, but nowadays if you carry on with that kind of thinking you get to be the one frowned at, and be called a homophobe (Gonda and Mounsey, 2007). Besides being affected by the era of existence, some ideas even get affected by the geographic environment like one idea being true in some place while being completely false in another place. A transforming thought is the one that is able to change human views while a transformative thought is the one that is presented openly to welcome change of situations that may even change itself.

Defensibility of flexibility over rigidity

Thus far I have been defending an idea that is directly contrary to thought rigidity posed by a thinker who claims universal knowledge. However, I understand the desire to be always consistent in some scholars, and I say that is an evil temptation that opens doors for thought dictatorship and having followers rather than critical interlocutors. According to Meijer (2018 and Cornell (2020) a universal person with a universal knowledge/ thought is impossible to exist because experience bears evidence to the fact that there was never a man who escaped limitations of time, space, and individuality. An apparent truth according to Bhagwan Rejneesh's teachings is that an honest philosopher will never worry about consistency in presenting his/ her thoughts as an ordinary human being who is subject to all natural limitations. Indeed, it might seem laudable that some thinkers would love the status of being “a thinker of all times” through having projected thoughts that portray some eternity (Hartsome, 1983). However, it is puzzling and astonishing to think of the unexplainable being that explains

all things. That means, if anyone claims to be a universal human, then since there is no definition of what that is, s/he must explain anything knowable to mankind. Within that very same line of thought, it is entailed that once a thought assumes universality and eternity it then becomes hard for ordinary human beings to comprehend it. The core idea here is that any thinker who gets very obsessed with consistency throughout his life creates an impossible situation of the limited that produces the unlimited. Friedrich Max Muller (1897) seems to have pre-emptively understood this argument of human understanding profoundly for him to say that at times students fail to understand a lot of things from those rigid teachers who honor consistency more than anything else. But due to suffering caused by the effects of manipulation, standardization, and generalization, they then resort to pretentious understanding which makes them completely divorced from their true honesty.

I argue that those students of pretentious understanding become a generational problem because they also grow to defend ideas that they do not even have an iota of understanding about them. In other words, a society taught by rigid scholars might end up having a cluster of thought dictators that would suffocate and truncate any thought development of their students. I posit that thought development is very important because it is the main thing that determines human development in any given space and time. That is why most of the time it is quite difficult to alienate thoughts from philosophers who authored them. Faced with this very fact, Michael Tomasello (2014) ended up admitting Rene Descartes's view that a human being is the mind. He then argued that everyone who emits progressive or developmental thoughts remains much existing and effective than the one who is stagnated with rigidity in outdated thoughts. In dealing with such thoughts, Ian Robertson

(2020) broke his silence by arguing that the differentiating factor between the priest and a philosopher is the fact that the priest seeks to be believed while a philosopher seeks understanding. Understanding here is in both senses that the teacher must understand his position and be understood by his students. According to OSHO Bagwaan Rejneesh that goal can only be achieved through subjecting one's thoughts under the scrutiny of rationality and convincing logic. In other words, when a philosopher wants to manipulate his students into being his followers who believe his thoughts as the absolute truth, he then turns into a priest. The nature of thought in a changing world ought to evolve and that should not give any discomfort to an honest philosopher. In fact, Rejneesh argues that thought transformation shows growth, being current, and willingness to develop. Having that in mind then means that scholars who should be ashamed of themselves are those who cling to thought consistency instead of rejecting outdated thoughts in the embrace of the current ones.

Some rigid thinkers face profound challenges nowadays in a world where there is a call for different forms of deconstruction. When Jack Derrida spoke about deconstruction, he was coming strong on the idea of deconstructivism which sought to override the rigid structures that were held by the community (Brodin, 2014; Schep, 2020). Structuralism was one of the ways to institutionalize the rigidity of ideas and thought presentation, and with any other rigidity-driven thoughts structuralism was pushed as the truth to abide by (Brodin, 2014). I will just take decolonization as one example of deconstructions that seem to be quite difficult for those rigid scholars who are a generation of coloniality. Some scholars who witnessed colonization and lived during the colonial era ingested all rigidity in Auguste Comte's positivism (Mandiet, 2013). In this epoch of deconstruction

theories and movements against rigidity and colonial structures, they suffer a lot of discomfort. According to Shawa (2019) some products of colonial-era scholarship get exposed with hypocrisy that exists in their minds when they fear decolonization and its theories like Afrocentrism. This is because of the fact that decolonization demands an entire change of views, and that is subject to thought flexibility rather than rigidity manifest in positivism. Schep (2020) Also argues that some scholars happen to have that discomfort and hypocrisy that exists in their minds when they start talking about decolonization to the rigidity that seems inherent in their thoughts. In my view, they suffer mental conflict when faced with changing times as their fellow existents exacerbate change. In the clear words of Heraclitus there seems to be a profound truth that change at any time in existence is inevitable (Bran, 2011). I take a stance of a serious embrace toward a deeper understanding of that idea. Bhagwan Rejneesh appears to be bringing a solution when he argues that embracing your nature makes you beautiful, that is in a sense that you get to be accepted and appreciated for the real you (McComack, 2018).

A human by nature is a being that exists in a changing world that keeps him/ her affected by various limitations that demand a constant change in thoughts for development to occur. It is then an argument I put forward that all thinkers, scholars, and teachers would be beautiful if they divorced thought rigidity in favor of flexibility in their thoughts as per their existential limitations. If all teachers can seek this beauty of Bhagwan Rejneesh, a new brand of free thinkers who are willing to sacrifice consistency for self-understanding and truthful thought presentation would emerge. Upon seeing how discomfoting thought rigidity is for scholars who suffer from it I then propose a chameleon metaphor. According to Carlson-Berne (2014) who

always enjoyed animal companionship, the chameleon is one animal that is endowed with natural wisdom that allows it to always change and adopt the status quo. Having noticed it as wisdom in such a small animal of kingdom reptilia (Barnes, 2014), and due to the benefits, it provides to the chameleon, I think scholars should learn something profound. Hollar (2012) and Barnes (2014) Argue that the chameleon's camouflage saves the chameleon from many dangers as it makes it relevant to the environment by blending with it. The chameleon metaphor marks a paradigm of being eclectic, using what works in that particular time and place in order to stay relevant and safe from all evils. However, it should be borne in mind that I am not in any way advocating for thought anarchy whereby all kinds of thought would be allowed and be viewed with acceptance even if they are not bringing any progress. Here I argue for a developmental and progressive thought inconsistency or flexibility which will aid in the openness of thought presentation by scholars.

I submit that thought camouflage is necessary for any scholar who wants to present his thoughts in an ordinary and pure manner. By thought camouflage, I envision a capability to; firstly, accept the particularity of the thinker, secondly accept the challengeability of the thought, and thirdly, the alterability of that thought due to natural effects. Rejneesh's philosophy seems to be doing more justice in the handling of human thoughts as opposed to thought rigidity vice upon honest scholars. The chameleon metaphor as a concept entails that a scholar must be open to questioning his/ her thoughts even if it demands the entire change of his worldview. It is for that reason that I include the idea of 'philosophical conversions' in the title of this paper. By philosophical conversions I mean those instances whereby a philosopher gets faced with profoundly challenging situations to his honest

worldview, and due to his honesty s/he deems it better to embrace change. Ivan Creppel (2003) narrated similar praises to Hitchens (2017) for some scholars who have resorted to that route at times when they discovered the level of indefensibility in their thoughts. It is understandable that since some scholars take their thoughts as their identity, they then fear change because they clearly see that it will temper their identity (Jackson, 2019). Indeed, I do not refute the argument that one's thoughts form part of his/ her identity. But the point I am assertive of is that at least scholars must allow philosophical conversions as long as they promise resonance with ordinary nature and progress. According to Carlson-Berne (2014) chameleons do not avoid going to other places because of the fear of change, but rather, they embrace change when it finds them. The main idea here is that scholars should not fear being critically engaged in questions and discussions about their thoughts because that actually grants them a chance to reflect and revise them where necessary. In fact, OSHO Bagwaan Rejneesh rejects thought stagnation as one of the serious illnesses that need immediate redress before it submerges someone into self-deceit.

CONCLUSION

An honest scholar is one who attempts, by all means, to balance emotions and logic without ending up being a

commander. This research argues that by virtue of being a philosopher, it then becomes mandatory that one explores all thoughts and avoids any form of prejudice in his/ her teaching. A thought camouflage envisaged by *Chameleon metaphor* liberates those scholars who have held on to their sacrosanct thoughts over time as some form of a belief system. Holding on to thoughts that are no longer relevant or even defensible enslaves someone to end up having to retrogress while human existence and wisdom should be progressing. Having unchangeable thoughts destroys the whole spirit of teaching and learning and reduces it all to mere memorizing of obsolete thoughts of ancient times. Using a Chameleon metaphor, a scholar has absolute freedom to (a) advance and revise his/ her thoughts at any time, (b) accept new information and enhance his/ her knowledge, (c) at some point accept that s/he needs to unlearn other things, and (d) teach students who will have critical thinking skills and face the world as it presents itself to them. The only time diversity may not be allowed is the time when it clouds the truth and threatens to arouse chaos. The chameleon metaphor itself does not advocate chaos, but it allows everyone to express their thoughts and be listened to without prejudice. It is for that argument that this research advocates change in scholars' philosophy in order to embrace decoloniality and avoid the hypocrisy of teaching decolonization while clinking to colonial thought systems.

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