

Clyde Winters Response

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Origin and Spread of Dravidian Speakers is Good Science-not Afrocentrism

Clyde Winters, Ph.D.

I have been asked to respond to this letter from Jaime Pretell. This is hard to do because the letter does not point out any specific points from my article to refute. Instead, the letter implies that the article is an example of Afrocentrism and that publication of this article in IJHG indicates that the journal is not peer reviewed.

The contents of Mr. Pretell's letter is full of bias and lacks specific reference to any variable in my paper. The assumptions on the part of Mr. Pretell are false. The paper was peer reviewed and one of the peer reviewers insisted that the paper should not be published if I did not discuss Chaubey et al. I did discuss Chaubey et al in the article specifically on page 327. Therefore the claim that IJHG publishes articles without peer review is unfounded.

Next Mr. Pretell says the article is an example of Afrocentrism but, he fails to present any examples of this alleged Afrocentrism in his letter. In fact the substance of my paper under review was never mentioned in this letter at all.

This paper was based on good science and argument. Research is the foundation of good science, or knowing in general. There are four methods of 1) Method of tenacity (one holds firmly to the truth, because "they know it" to be true); 2) method of authority (the method of established belief, i.e., the Bible or the "experts" says it, it is so); 3) method of intuition (the method where a proposition agrees with reason, but not necessarily with experience); and 4) the method of science (the method of attaining knowledge which calls for self-correction). To explain a possible recent migration of Dravidian speakers to India, I use the scientific method which calls for theory construction and hypothesis testing.

The aim of science is theory construction (F.N. Kirlinger, 1986, pp.6-10; R. Braithwaite, 1955, pp. 1-10). A theory is a set of interrelated constructs, propositions and definitions that provide a systematic understanding of phenomena by outlining relations among a group of variables that explain and predict phenomena.

Scientific inquiry involves issues of theory construction, control and experimentation. Scientific knowledge must rest on testing, rather than mere induction which can be defined as inferences of laws and generalizations, derived from observation.

Karl Popper (2002) rejects this form of logical validity based solely on inference and conjecture (pp. 33-65). Popper maintains that confirmation in science is arrived at through falsification.

Therefore to confirm a theory in science one tests the theory through rigorous attempts at falsification. In falsification the researcher uses cultural, linguistic, anthropological and historical knowledge to invalidate a proposed theory. If a theory can not be falsified through yes of the variables associated with the theory it is confirmed. It can only be disconfirmed when new generalizations associated with the original theory fail to survive attempts at falsification. In short, science centers on conjecture and refutations.

In this paper I hypothesized that the Dravidian speakers came to India from Africa. In support of my hypothesis I cited numerous linguists and anthropologists who claim that the Dravidians originated in Africa. For example, B.B. Lal, a leading Indian archaeologist made it clear that he saw a relationship between the C-Group people of Nubia and Dravidian speakers. B.B. Lal is not an Afrocentric scholar. There is also botanical evidence of a recent migration of Dravidian speakers from Africa to India (Winters, 2008).

In relation to the anthropological and linguistic evidence I cited Aravanan, Homburger, Sergent, Sastri, Lahovary, Upadhyaya. These researchers are European and Indian scholars. In relation to genetic evidence connecting Dravidians and Africans I cited the work of Kivislid et al, Gonzalez et al and Cordaux- these researchers are not Afrocentrists. Kivislid for example, found 26 Indians carrying the M1 hg. He can not say that this was a mistake. To say this, implies that we should discount all of his research if he was unable to recognize that he had mistakenly found this many carriers of M1 among Dravidian speakers, especially when Gonzalez also found M1 among Dravidians.

This short review of my paper makes it clear that works cited in the paper were written by specialists in their respective fields; and not written to advance the cause of Afrocentrism.

It appears that Mr. Pretell did not really read my article at all. If he had read the article he would have realized that Chaubey et al had been discussed, per the recommendation of one of the IJHG peer reviewers. Moreover, how can he claim a paper is Afrocentric when the citations within the paper are written by specialists in the various fields who are not even identified as Afrocentrists.

There is nothing in Mr. Pretell's letter dealing with the science in my article. He does not dispute any variable discussed in my hypothesis.

It seems that Mr. Pretell just assumed that IJHG is not peer reviewed, assumptions based on his personal arrogance, that lacked any validity. Moreover, it is clear that Mr. Pretell wrote this letter with a political agenda in mind. From the contents of this letter Mr. Pretell appears to believe that any journal not published by Eurocentric institutions must be illegitimate for this gentlemen to assume that IJHG would claim to be peer reviewed and not conduct peer review of every article it publishes.

As outlined above Mr. Pretell is wrong in assuming that this article promotes Afrocentrism. This article is based on hypothesis testing -not political posturing. The idea that Dravidians originated in Africa is good science and has nothing to do with Afrocentrism.

Reference:

- R. Braithwaite, Scientific explanation, 1955.
F.N. Kirlinger, Foundations of behavior research, 1986.
K. Popper, The Logic of Scientific Discovery, 2002.
C. Winters, African millets carried to India by Dravidian Speakers?
Annals of Botany (19 March 2008). <http://aob.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/eletters/100/5/903>
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