

Re: proof that most etymologies are only fairy-tales

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Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2008-08/msg00084.html>

- *From:* Trond Engen <trondnet@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Sun, 03 Aug 2008 10:53:42 +0200
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analyst41@xxxxxxxxxxxx skreiv:

On Aug 2, 6:22 pm, Joachim Pense <s...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

analys...@xxxxxxxxxxxx (in sci.lang):

On Aug 2, 2:13 pm, "Brian M. Scott"
<b.sc...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

<analys...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx> [...] in sci.lang:

So one must bear in mind
that erroneous etymologies
are
another source of noise in
reconstructions and I was
surprised to find that even
something so written about
as
"bear" is subject to scholarly
disagreement.

As Joachim has already pointed out, none of
this supports
the claim made in your subject line. I'll add
that you've
provided exactly **one** example of a
disputed etymology,
which wouldn't be proof that **most**
etymologies are
fairytales even if uncertainty did equate to
fairytales.

Re: proof that most etymologies are only fairy-tales

You guys' lack of imagination is somewhat saddening. If something could be derived either from "brown one" or "wild animal" – clearly one of them is sufficiently wrong to be classified as a fairy tale.

being wrong doesn't qualify to be a fairy tale.
one is not most.

The next step is induction – if there is guaranteed to be a fairy tale etymology for such a common word (that seems to have been quite written about)– how is one to trust any etymology?

Well, you are quite naive if you are surprised about a single etymology being challenged. That happens all the time. You shouldn't depend on trust and belief.

If you are saying that all of hist ling is being offered on a "take it or leave it" basis – we are in agreement. But to pay college professors to teach this mess as a real scholarly discipline isn't right.

It's not what anyone is saying. Quite the opposite.

And college professors are not only paid to teach the discipline but to do research, discuss and improve it. And they teach the _methods_, so that their students have the tools to challenge the current results and in their turn take the science even further. As are professors in any other scientific discipline.

here is an idea for Hindutva guys – ask courts to force all American universities that teach hist ling (at least the part about Sanskrit) to include a disclaimer that its all unscientific speculation.

Your parallel with evolutionary biology is telling. You argue that historical linguistics has to be false since it can't provide final answers when any detail is open for discussion even by its most prominent names. But even you would know that this is exactly what makes it a science. It's bloody obvious that you don't dislike it because it's unscientific, but because you can't reconcile its conclusions with your preferred ethno-religious myths.

Which pretty much makes you and your lot irrelevant in the history of human knowledge.

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Trond Engen

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– comparative

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