



12 July 2011

Sinned against, not sinning



16 June 2011

We believe the recent criticisms of Satoshi Kanazawa's work cannot be justified ("Damage limitation: evolutionary psychologists turn on controversial peer", 2 June). Contrary to the assertion that Kanazawa does poor work, he has published 70 articles in peer-reviewed journals in the fields of psychology, sociology, political science, biology and medicine. These are listed on his London School of Economics web page and many of them have been published in top high-impact journals.

The critics assert that many of these papers are "bad science" and have been published only as a result of a faulty peer-review process. This cannot be accepted. The editors of journals send the papers submitted to them to reviewers with expertise in the fields in question and publish only those that are deemed to be sound. Thus, all of Kanazawa's papers have been judged as sound by competent reviewers. Others may disagree, and in the case of innovative papers of the kind Kanazawa writes, frequently do. Time eventually tells whether the authors or their detractors are right.

The critics complain that when Kanazawa has a paper rejected by one journal, he sends it to another and publishes it there. Who among the academy's members has not done that? Reviewers frequently misjudge a paper and editors accept their recommendations. The author then sends it elsewhere and it is accepted. If there were anything wrong with this practice, then, as the first online comment under "Damage limitation" puts it: "A few Nobel prizes will have to be returned."

The detractors assert that Kanazawa rarely responds to brickbats. On the contrary, we believe that while he sometimes does not respond immediately, he frequently deals with criticisms in his subsequent work.

For example, in respect to the criticisms made by Columbia University's Andrew Gelman about his paper reporting that physically more attractive parents are more likely to have daughters, Kanazawa replicated his earlier finding with a different dataset from a different nation, and published the replication in the *Reproductive Sciences* journal earlier this year.

Kanazawa even sought Gelman's comments on the draft and the Columbia academic's contribution is acknowledged in the published paper.

Kanazawa's 2010 *American Psychologist* article also responds to many of the criticisms that were levelled against his 2004 *Psychological Review* article.

Finally, we believe that the proper place to make criticisms of academic papers is in the journals in which they were published, not in letters to the press where they cannot be adequately answered.

Alex Beaujean, department of psychology, Baylor University

Christopher Brand, department of psychology, University of Edinburgh (1970-1997)

Bruce Charlton, department of psychology, University of Buckingham

Eric Crampton, department of economics, University of Canterbury

Aurelio José Figueredo, department of psychology, University of Arizona

Gordon G. Gallup, Jr., department of psychology, State University of New York

Paul Gottfried, department of history, Elizabethtown College

Henry Harpending, department of anthropology, University of Utah

Richard Lynn, department of psychology, University of Ulster

Kevin MacDonald, department of psychology, California State University

Gerhard Meisenberg, department of biochemistry, Ross University Medical School

Michael E. Mills, department of psychology, Loyola Marymount University

Helmuth Nyborg, department of psychology, Aarhus University

Byron Roth, department of psychology, Dowling College, New York

J. Philippe Rushton, department of psychology, University of Western Ontario

Stephen Rushton, College of Education, University of South Florida

Donald Timpler (retired), department of psychology, Alliant International University

James Thompson, department of psychology, University College London, UK

Birgitta Tullberg, department of evolutionary ecology, Stockholm University

Fredrik Ullén, department of cognitive neuroscience, Karolinska Institute

Tatu Vanhanen, department of political science, University of Tampere

Erich Weede, department of sociology, University of Bonn

Predrag Zarevski, department of psychology, University of Zagreb

Readers' comments

- **Jelte M. Wicherts** 16 June, 2011

There are at least 24 papers in peer-reviewed journals that have criticized Kanazawa's work directly and he has responded to only 3 of those papers in his own work. So Kanazawa does not frequently deal with criticisms of his work. For instance, in his most recent paper in *Personality and Individual Differences* (in press) he discussed at length his 2008 paper in *Intelligence* without referring to any of the rather severe criticisms leveled against it (despite the fact much of the critique was published in the same journal).

- **Jelte M. Wicherts** 16 June, 2011

Oh. I just checked it with Google Scholar and he refers to 7 of the 24 papers that were listed in the original letter to THE. This is still not a very good track record when it comes to responding to criticism.

- **Jelte M. Wicherts** 16 June, 2011

I certainly am looking forward to debate with Kanazawa! Until now he has ignored my criticism.

- **h.pryce** 16 June, 2011

Hi Jelte,

I had a look at your paper. You should get a word processor that knows how to spell publicly. More substantively, use the full data and run an ordered Probit on the race dummies clustered by evaluator. I have no idea what you will find.

- **William Andrew Summers** 22 June, 2011

In the domain of persecuted scholarship, the news that persists after the media has retreated is often the more revealing news. The behavioral science section of the U.S. National Association of Scholars in May 1995 adopted a resolution condemning the depublication of Chris Brand's THE "g" FACTOR (see the text he has placed online) Basic to the resolution was a scrutiny of the published text by the experts assembled. No one could spot what in the book was deemed objectionable vis a vis the relevant science.

- **William Andrew Summers** 23 June, 2011

Further to this matter, as an American, I have long pondered the "disconnect" that would be evident if Blacks were

(a) covertly photographed in a random selection--say from exiting our major 24-hour "Super Store" chain-- and (b) randomly photographed from our major prime time TV programs. Current technology easily permits composites to be made that would be compatible with a scientific comparison. Fair minded "eyeballing" of the two populations is enough to make one wince at how we attain contrived comfort in this matter by way of celluloid deception--indeed by way of mass mesmerism. Add to this a disincentive to academic writing about the topic: Out of (outta) sight, outta mind !

- **Eric Crampton** 27 June, 2011

Whatever you think of the quality of Kanazawa's published academic work, the timing of the open letter by Kanazawa's critics was malicious. Writing the letter of opposition in the midst of a populist push for his ouster (based on a blog post!) just isn't on.

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