The argumentative scientist

In a recent interview, Barak Obama deplored the changing ethics in public life remarking that 'people are entitled to their opinions but not to their facts'. Misrepresentation of facts, to sway beliefs and convictions and persuade people to accept a conjecture, appears to have pervaded politics globally. I suppose it is only a matter of time before the scientific community, with disappearing lung spaces that leave little options for entertainment other than the loud media, is re-educated into accepting this diabolic emerging tactic.

A recent editorial (Arunan, E., *Curr. Sci*., 2018, **114**(7), 1385–1386) is a disturbing example of the extent to which this decay is pervading Indian science. *Current Science* is a respected journal published in collaboration with the Indian Academy of Sciences, and I would certainly expect that its editorials present arguments and perspectives in a style befitting a learned science academy of the nation. Unfortunately, this editorial in an argumentative attempt to establish a thesis, indulged in voicing a string of patent untruths as if they were verifiable facts.

V. Radhakrishnan had not built flying machines or boats during his earlier tenures at CalTech or CSIRO, Australia. He came to RRI from the Radiophysics Laboratory of CSIRO, where he had established himself in research on both pulsars and the interstellar medium, which resulted in outstanding publications with several hundreds of citations. Moreover, he had distinguished himself by championing prescient experimental developments that positioned CSIRO radiophysics into world leadership.

A colleague at RRI had this to say of the editorial: 'I hope he (the author) writes at least about cricket more factually'.

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Orion's belt

The article by Vahia and Halkare[1] is innovative and the authors are correct in stating that we need to document myths before they disappear under the garb of development. However, there are a couple of errors that need to be corrected. Figure 6, which is also shown on the cover, refers to the belt of Libra, instead of the belt of Orion. In Greek mythology, Orion was a hunter; the three stars represent his belt, beneath which, at an angle lies his scabbard. The scabbard is of importance to astronomers as it contains the spectacular Orion nebula (also termed M42). Libra, were it to be depicted in this map of the heavens, would be a little to the east of Scorpius.

Figure 2 has a printer's devil as Orion is misspelt as Orian. Readers would also be interested to note that Canis Minor, which has been referred to in the text, but not in figure 2, lies to the Southeast of Orion. This would explain the circular path that the bullocks take to remove the husk.

1. Vahia, M. N. and Halkare, G., *Curr. Sci.*, 2017, **113**(6), 1041–1049.

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Response:

We thank Pai and Aradhya for pointing out the errors in our article. Both are printer's devils, but that does not absolve us of the errors that have crept in.

The corrected versions of both the figures are given here.

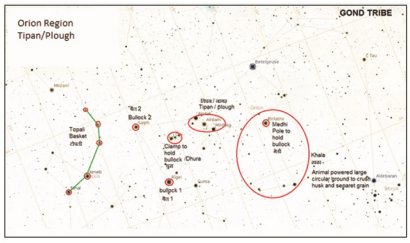

Figure 2. Region around Orion constellations as seen by Gonds.

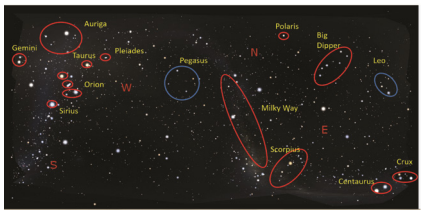

Figure 6. Constellations of importance to the tribals of Central India. Blue circles indicate constellations known to one tribe only (Pegasus to Kolam and Leo to Gonds). Constellations marked in red were known to more than one tribe even if their individual stories and interpretations varied.

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