

Creationist Cousins

Creationist cousins, they're my relations, I love 'em
 But when they talk about Jesus and Revelations and Judges
 I've gotta take it up with them
 'Cause there's a better explanation for the place that we come from, okay?
 Creationist cousins, they're my relations, I love 'em
 But at the dinner table we get on some crazy discussions
 I'm always questioning their basic assumptions
 And saying, "yes I believe we came from monkeys, okay?"

That's the idea that most enrages Darwin's detractors
 The idea that *we* came from ape-like ancestors
 Some people *still* question this, and say: "If we came from
 Monkeys, then how come there's monkeys still in existence?"
 Allow me to illustrate a similar instance
 I'm descended from Dutch Calvinist immigrants
 Who came to Canada in the 1950s
 And I still have second cousins who live in the Netherlands
 But they're not my ancestors; they're my relatives
 Since we have common genetic elements
 Inherited from our great grandparents
 That's just *three* generations back, but here's the relevance
 Three *thousand* generations back, human beings *all* have
 Common ancestors, so really we're *all* relatives
 Which also means all relationships are relatively incestuous
 Further back we have common ancestors with chimps
 And gorillas and elephants and plants, and billions
 Of years back our ancestors are all single-cellular
 But what I find incredible isn't this principle
 Of "unity of common descent", that's just elegant
 What's incredible to me is that some of my living relatives
 Still believe the earth was created about seventy-odd
 Centuries ago – around the time of the Egyptians
 By a benevolent God and that this same God
 Is currently manipulating the elements
 And that evolutionism is *devilish*
 Did I mention that I was descended from Calvinist fundamentalists?
 Well, I still have cousins as dedicated representatives
 Approximately twenty percent of them
 And at the dinner table we debate statistics

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I say, "Creationism is unscientific
Ninety-nine percent of practicing scientists accept evolution
As the best explanation we have for living systems
Why? Because there's overwhelming empirical evidence!"
And they say, "Baba, science isn't run by consensus
That one percent is quite significant
Those are the creationist scientists who have found signs
Of intelligent design, but whenever they try and
Publish it in the mainstream literature, they get black-listed
Besides, your presuppositions are materialistic
Maybe all that evidence scientists *say* they've collected
Just empirically *proves* that God wants our faith to be tested!"
So then I say, "But that means your benevolent God
Is perpetrating a massive intellectual fraud!
So either evolution is the victim of a frame job
Which explains all of its predictive successes
Or we have to separate God from the scientific method"
And that's when my sister steps in
To defend a different kind of creationism – *Cultural* creationism,
Also known as "social constructivism" or "post-modernism"
She says: "Baba, the Western scientific method
Is just as subjective as every other cultural tradition
Except it's just better at *pretending* to be objective
Because, like, all behaviour is socially constructed
And mostly, it just promotes injustice
And, like, gender roles have nothing to do with genitals
They're just a way for men to control women's goals
And try to turn us all into Playboy centerfolds
Haven't you heard about that tribe in the Amazon
Where the woman does the man's jobs and hunts and plants the crops
And brings home the food for the man to wash?
Um, I can't remember exactly what that clan is called
But I know it's a published fact
Because I read about it in my Women's Studies class
And it *proves* that gender is a socially constructed act
So how does sociobiology explain that?"
And all I can do is come back with more statistics
About the high percentage of indigenous
Societies where polygamy is prolific
And about human sexual dimorphism
And the different reproductive investments between men and women

Which of course then gets my religious cousins offended
Because it doesn't credit Genesis with our humble beginnings
And, let's just say, the discussions are *endless*
But it isn't about *who* is impartial; no one's impartial
It's about how much evidence you can marshal
And how you deliver the parcel
And when my relatives argue, I have to have *faith*
That we can reach the genuine article in a rational way
That's a different *kind* of faith than my cousins have
In divine creation, but hey, to all of my relatives
And fellow primates, I say
If it makes you feel better, go head and pray
In fact, here's how I pray in a secular way
I say, "I have creationist relatives and relative apes
And I wish them all happiness, whatever their faith
And I wish myself patience, since I relish debates
Let us all be respectful and still tell it straight"

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