

MIT - Conversations You Can't Have on Campus

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### Evolution vs. Creationism Reflection Paper

The discussion about creationism vs. evolution during our discussion helped to expand my views on how people perceive evolution in contemporary society. Moreover, the topic of religion is useful in helping to rationalize people's views on the topic. Taking on a psychological perspective, we can also decipher how people can hold evolution or creationism at such high regard. Specifically, the interplay between Hindu beliefs and creationism made me realize that people could eloquently rationalize the idea that creationism and evolution can go together hand-in-hand. To further expand on this I shall discuss briefly Hinduism. For example, someone made the comment that Hindu people believe in their deities, but at the same time hold scientific discovery in high regard (as in, the idea that humans evolved from lower life forms). It is not necessarily contradictory that these two beliefs can coexist.

Although the topic of religion was heavily de-emphasized, religion is an integral part in understanding the weaving of evolution and creationism. I feel that many people in today's society use religion as a means of establishing a social circle. Moreover, although religion may be important in their lives, it has come to serve an ancillary function for many people. Although many people are religious, the prevalence of using religion as a mere guide for morals and ethics, rather than as a strict measure to live one's life has prevailed, based off my perception. For example, during the discussion, it was revealed the majority of the people in the room were non-denominational Christians. This shows that people mainly use religion as a

means for holding their values, as opposed to a fire and brimstone approach. Let us compare religion to a relationship. Let us take Sally and Bob as examples. Sally has been faithful to Bob for many years. One day Sally decides to have sexual relations with Cory. Bob finds out that Sally has cheated on him with his best friend Cory. Bob is infuriated. He can't rationalize how Sally would do this to him, considering that they have had a relatively stable relationship. He decides to dump Sally because she has been unfaithful. Suppose that we replace Sally with the religion of Christianity. We use this to show that Christianity can serve a useful purpose but can be replaced. Sally may have provided Bob with comfort, a means for de-stressing himself, and a general foundation of well-being, etc. But after she has committed a wrong to him, he dismisses her.

I feel that some people do this with religion - they are believers until it becomes inconvenient. For example, suppose someone was a fervent Muslim but then his daughter got cancer and his wife was struck by a train and died. He decides to forsake Islam because he has perceived that God has wronged him. As such, it becomes evident that religion can serve a purpose for developing ethics and morals - at a fee of convenience. Although this does not generalize for everyone, this idea still exists.

Although it is easy to belittle those that are believers in creationism, I can definitely see why a religious person may hold creationism in high regard. I feel that people generally adapt to their environments. According to the psychology of human behavior, this is true. People tend to derive the same general values that their parents held. There is a high correlation between the religion that parents hold and the religion their offspring practice. Because of this, it is easy to understand that if the parents were religious and believers in creationism, it would be likely that

their offspring hold these same values. Therefore, these people should not be belittled. This also works in the other direction. Some people fervently believe in evolution, without attempting to realize that people may hold other views. This may be because they were raised in an environment that one-dimensionally saw evolution as the only notion to believe in. The bottom line is that the environment helps to shape people's views on the world and it is up to the individual to see where others are coming from. Through these points, my view on evolution and creationism was highly expanded.

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