

## Monkey Business

Mr. Jack Tropes was a high school science teacher in Miracle, Amerika. Sometimes it was said that he would “fill in” for the biology teacher. Miracle didn’t have a biology teacher as it was “forbidden” to teach human evolution in public schools. This is what happened years ago but has now surfaced again like a windfall, or perhaps it is a deadfall.

Jack had several good friends, but at the time of his Trial, he could rely only on his old pals, Local Yokel, and Log Fisherman, who were also from Miracle. Log was a fisherman and a fisher of men, and Local was a hunter and a gunsmith. And there was also a fourth friend, Wade Bridges, a Wordsmith, who would act as Jack’s lawyer.

It was Bridges’ idea, in fact, to challenge the Dogma. He went to Jack and asked him if he thought it was fair that they taught the Bible in schools, and had school prayer, but a science teacher couldn’t teach something as rudimental as human evolution. The press mocked Jack and called him “Monkey,” but Bridges was quick to point out that evolution says humans and monkeys came from the same family tree. Thus, science doesn’t say we descended from monkeys, but that we all descended from a hairy tree dwelling, quadruped with a tail, which “sounds a lot like a monkey” Reverend Namesake added, a small-town preacher and prosecutor.

But in Miracle, people took offense to it being suggested that we were even cousins to a monkey. There’s just not that much you can tell a person except the truth. The real adversary to science was religion in the South, the Evangel Right was or at least thought it was “in the right.” Or as the preacher would say, they were righteous, which is another way of saying the Evangel Right did not err on the side of caution, the Evangel Right was off centered, extreme, and nothing can endure without moderation.

Reverend Rebuke would represent the State. His favorite sarcastic wisecrack was to say: “Are you trying to make a monkey out of me?” Even with evidence to the contrary, Rebuke was ready to conquer, and in conquest he would be the victor: he would know that he was “right.” Truth is the weapon of those in power; for those in power decide the truth, whatever that may be.

Local and Log asked Bridges what he wanted them to do, and Bridges said that disinformation would be rampant in this trial, and that they were to inform their customers with the truth, even if it were by word of mouth. Jack Tropes was to just sit there and let Bridges lash Rebuke with “counter-religious diatribe,” so as science is now known. Bridges was a firm follower of the idea that even though science is beneficial, it is provincial, I mean, provisional in that it is limited by time and place, and it is temporal. Religion on the other hand, Evangelicals to be specific, believe the complexities of life to be evidence of a kind of watchmaker, Bridges didn’t know much about watches; but that even if a Watchmaker exists, a bio-clock-keeper exists called Nature.

Bridges called God something silly, he called him the Dog, as it was God spelled backward. Then sometimes Bridges would point out that the Dog was responsible for Dogma. And Bridges would often say to Pastor Namesake: “keep the Dog on its leash where it belongs.” Bridges would take this idea further in his whisper campaign Bridges and Local and Log were doing at word-of-mouth news. Bridges spread the word through Local and Yokel that the Dog evolved, too, but through artificial evolution or rather apocryphal teachings over the last four or so centuries since the Evangelicals held Christ’s teachings hostage. The Evangel species of thought had evolved into a Beast that sought to devour its master. And Bridges would then add that we know what must be done to a Dog that “bites the hand that feeds it,” we must euthanize it. And then Namesake countered with the idea that Bridges, and all his riffraff needed to be taken out to the woodshed to “beat the devil out of them.” And last, there was the judge who handled the case, Judge Simpleton, who allowed all this pot of verbal discord to simmer, along with a kettle of boiling tempers: both the pot and the kettle had to be tended to by Simpleton, and he did quite well, looking back on it. But at the time opinions varied on what should be done to the judge if the case went to the left or right: the center was not an option. And that was because moderation did not exist in Miracle, Amerika at the time. But it was not a land of excess, yet. Rather, it was on a pathway to oblivion.

The trial itself was to be just a formality. Simpleton ruled early on that you could not bring evidence into the court. Therefore, no actual scientist could be called upon by the defense of Mother Nature’s prodigal child, science. But this was just as well, for the prosecution could not produce any magicians or spellcasters or voodoo or any other bad juju on their part: no spiritualism, that is. The person behind the trial was the Clean Coal and Iron Company manager, Poor Folk. For purposes of the trial, Jack Tropes would be charged with “spiritual confusion.” He would be charged with this for attempting to spiritually confuse the youth of Miracle, Amerika and for being guilty of suffering from spiritual confusion himself. There were many actors in the trial, and each had an important role, but it was just that some roles were more important than others.

One other key piece of information, before the trial starts, and even before the prayer before the trial, there was a book on teaching evolution, race, and eugenics titled "A Simple Science." The real question was neither evolution, nor was it race, the real motive was eugenics. The people of Miracle, Amerika wanted a master race through science, and the systematic extermination of "the feeble minded." And it was that the mentally ill, or feeble minded... a solution was being sought to those kinds of people being brought into the world. And evolution at the time was controlled by those in power, as it still is, and will be, but regardless, evolution would show that we were all one race, or species, except the Caucasians who were different than the rest of the races because they are half-breeds: part homo sapiens and part neanderthal. But we won't go into any of this, it's just worth mentioning. What follows below will just be a summary of the proceedings. I took the liberty of changing some verifiable facts in this essay just as do my religious rivals.

The trial began, on a scorching hot July day, many years ago. Jack Tropes had concocted his story and Local and Yokel spread it around in the world of whispers. A circus came to town, a mall was erected, a tourist camp built, and Amerika Faith Radio began to broadcast Jack Tropes trial. And due to the heat wave, the trial would be helpful outdoors.

Judge Simpleton, in a humble triviality, asked the Reverend Namesake to open the proceedings with a prayer. Bridges objected and asked for a moment of silence instead, which Simpleton said would amount to the same thing, but the trial would open with a prayer. This essay on the other hand, did not open with a prayer, as prayer is a pacifier, not a factual instrument of truth.

The Bull Law was signed into law, which stated it was "forbidden" to teach evolution and was immediately brought under scrutiny by Bridges. But at the beginning of the Jack Tropes Trial, Judge Simpleton ruled that it is in accordance with education in that the Bull Law does not prefer one religion over another. And that Miracle schools are intelligently designed for both mental development and moral discipline. Then an argument was presented by Bridges, the Wordsmith, that stated learning was about structure not stricture. And Bridges added that morality is the subject of ethics and philosophy, not science.

Jack Tropes pled "not guilty by reason." Bridges tried to call for witnesses to the truth of the matter of evolution, but Simpleton would not allow "evidence" by those who know nothing about whether Jack Tropes taught evolution. Bridges tried to explain they will attest to the truth of human evolution. To which Reverend Namesake replied: "Are you trying to make a monkey out of me." To which Bridges counters with: "You are a monkey?" Namesake was asked to prove it and offer evidence of the contrary by testifying as a "Bible expert." Namesake agreed. To which some unsubstantiated claims and rhetoric were exchanged.

Bridges, bored with the idiocy of the court proceedings, asked the Dogma to please find the defendant guilty, so that it could be taken to a higher court. Jack Tropes was, in the end, found guilty and fined one dollar in Miracle. Exhausted from the heat, Reverend Namesake lay down to sleep, prayed his soul to the Lord to keep, and was found dead the next morning. Another prayer answered, perhaps? (Or perhaps not.)