**JULY 27, 2008 THESKEPTICARENA.COM**

**ARGUMENT # 4: THE "INVISIBLE PINK UNICORN / DRAGON IN THE GARAGE" FALSE COMPARISON TACTIC.**

**Typical Usage: "Of course I can't prove that God, spirits, UFO’s, paranormal phenomena or metaphysical realities don't exist, but you can't prove to me that invisible pink unicorns don't exist either."**

**The comparison used in this skeptical argument is notoriously common, yet severely flawed and ludicrous.**

**WINSTON, YOUR CHOICE OF THE WORDS “FLAWED” AND “LUDICROUS” IS RIGHT ON THE MONEY. BUT NOT AS A REFERENCE TO SKEPTICS. THEY MORE ACCURATELY DESCRIBE YOUR THINKING PROCESSES.**

**It is often more of a belittling tactic than a reasoned logical argument. Used when skeptics are challenged to disprove a paranormal claim,**

**WINSTON, YOU ARE COMMITTING THE LOGICAL FALLACY OF “SWITCHING THE BURDEN OF PROOF.” THE CLAIMANT IS THE ONE WHO HAS THE BURDEN TO PROVE THEIR CLAIM. NO ONE IS UNDER ANY DUTY TO DISPROVE ANY CLAIM. ONLY PEOPLE WHO CANNOT BACK UP THEIR CLAIMS RESORT TO “SWITCHING THE BURDEN OF PROOF.”**

**Other similar variations of this are "but you can’t prove to me that there wasn’t a dragon hiding in my garage either" and "but you can’t prove to me that little green gremlins aren’t stealing pennies from my pockets either," etc. The premise behind this argument is that if a claim is unprovable, then it’s in the same category as everything that’s been made up or fictionalized.**

**WINSTON, YOU GOT THE PREMISE WRONG AGAIN. CLAIMS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE UP OR FICTIONALIZED ARE IN THE CATEGORY OF FRAUDULENT CLAIMS. CLAIMS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN PROVEN ARE IN A SEPARATE CATEGORY, UNLESS IT IS LATER PROVEN THAT THEY WERE MADE UP, IN WHICH CASE THEY WOULD THEN MOVE TO THE CATEGORY OF FRAUDULENT CLAIMS.**

**However, it is a complete straw man argument**

**WINSTON - AND WHO WOULD KNOW BETTER ABOUT STRAWMAN ARGUMENTS THAN SOMEONE WHO USES THEM IN JUST ABOUT EVERY ONE OF HIS ARGUMENTS: THAT WOULD BE YOU WINSTON.**

**because it falsely redefines the opposing position in terms that make it more easily attackable, using false comparisons.**

**WINSTON, THEY ARE NOT REDEFINING THE POSITION, THEY ARE ASKING FOR PROOF. RELIGION ALWAYS TRIES THE SAME TRICK: IF YOU DARE QUESTION THEM OR ASK FOR PROOF, THEY TRY TO CLAIM THAT YOU ARE NOW THE ONE MAKING THE CLAIM. THERE IS ONLY ONE REASON PEOPLE DO THIS: IT IS BECAUSE THEY DO NOT HAVE THE PROOF.**

**A simple examination reveals this.**

**1) First of all, the biggest problem with this argument is that what people actually experience is NOT the same thing as what a skeptic deliberately makes up for satirical purposes! To compare the two is ludicrous and illogical. Since the skeptic using this argument hasn’t really experienced invisible pink unicorns himself, everyone knows that he is deliberately making up something fictitious to put down something he doesn’t believe in**

**WINSTON, WRONG AGAIN. THE SKEPTIC IS NOT PUTTING DOWN SOMETHING HE DOESN’T BELIEVE IN, HE IS DEMANDING EVIDENCE.**

**2) Second, what someone sincerely believes is NOT the same as what someone knowingly makes up.**

**OKAY WINSTON - I’LL GIVE YOU THAT ONE.**

**Since the skeptic who uses this argument don’t believe in invisible pink unicorns himself, it is pointless as well as inconsiderate to compare that to what people genuinely believe and experience, such as God, spirits, or ESP.**

**WINSTON, SO WHAT THIS IS REALLY ABOUT IS YOU GOT YOUR FEELINS HURT?**

**Of course, just because someone genuinely believes something doesn’t make it true, but to compare an honest person to a deliberate fraud is not a valid comparison.**

**WINSTON, ONCE AGAIN WE ARE IN TOTAL AGREEMENT.**

**3) Third, if like paranormal, psychic, religious, and spiritual experiences, there were millions of credible intelligent people out there claiming to have seen or experienced invisible pink unicorns or dragons in their garage, then this comparison would have some merit. But there aren’t, so this comparison is without merit.**

**OKAY WINSTON, LET’S MOVE ALONG ALREADY.**

**4) Fourth, the significant difference between experiencing God, the divine, or the mystical, and the fictional example of invisible pink unicorns is that throughout history millions of honest, sane, intelligent people have experiences with the former which resulted in life changing effects, but the same can't be said for invisible pink unicorns.**

**WINSTON, GIVE THE PINK UNICORNS A REST.**

**5) Fifth, just because something is unprovable does not automatically put it in the same category as everything else that is unprovable. For example, I can’t prove what I ate last night for dinner or what I thought about. Without witnesses, I can’t prove what I saw on TV or how high I scored in a video game either. But that doesn’t mean that these things are in the same category as every story in the fiction section of the library.**

**WINSTON, I THINK THE OPERATIVE PHRASE IN THAT PARAGRAPH WAS “VIDEO GAME.”**

**WAY TOO MUCH TIME ON THE JOYSTICK - TOO LITTLE TIME IN THE BOOKS.**

**The bottom line is that while it is true that no one can disprove the existence of invisible pink unicorns, the evidence to support God, spirits and psychic phenomena, although mostly anecdotal, is vastly greater, more significant, more relevant, and more sincere than the evidence to support invisible pink unicorns and other fictitious examples deliberately made up by skeptics.**

**WINSTON, WE DIDN’T MAKE UP THE PINK UNICORNS - THEY ARE REAL!**

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**France: Court suspends "virgin case"**

Is virginity an “essential quality” of a bride? Should husbands be able to legally insist on it? And in case it turns out to be lacking on the wedding night – should they be entitled to get the marriages annulled and to drop their brides like defective articles? This is currently a topic of hot debate in France.

 A French Muslim couple – he an engineer in his 30s, she a trainee nurse – had married in 2006. When on the nuptial bed he found her not to be a virgin, he promptly announced it to the still partying wedding guests and sent her back to her parents. Last month, the marriage was annulled at the husband’s request, after a court accepted his accusation that his wife had lied about being a virgin. Under the French civil code, lying about an "essential quality" of the relation can be taken as a reason for annulment of a marriage.

 The case sparked a hot public debate and feminists called it a fatwa against women’s liberty. Justice Minister Rachida Dati - backed by President Sarkozy for her decision - directed the public prosecutor to file an appeal against the annulment, lest it sets a precedent establishing virginity as a requirement for marriage that can be legally claimed. The case is suspended, the marriage valid again - for the time being and at least till September, when the decision of the appeal court is expected.

 This twist, however, has created a quite absurd situation, as none of the protagonists is willing to continue this marriage restored for principles’ sake. The woman objected the decision and declared through her lawyer that she just wanted the marriage to be over so she can get on with her life.

**France: Ten stitches that can save a life**

French plastic surgeons offer a new intact hymen to women who need to prove their virginity for marriage, social or religious reasons. The operation, conducted for outpatients in some private clinics, is just a cut and ten stitches, costing half an hour and two to three thousand Dollar. But for most of the clients, it opens a new life.

The French College of Gynecologists opposes hymenoplasty – quite cynically - “on moral, cultural and health grounds”. But the demand for it is growing fast and it is practiced in many private clinics. France has a Muslim population of five million. Among the clientele are foreign students, who would – despite academic certificates - not be able to return to their homeland without an intact hymen. It is not just a marriage commodity – their very lives depend on it. In two cases that have been recently reported from Egypt, men have killed their brides on the wedding night because they could not deflower them (in one of the cases post mortem proved that the murder was an “error” - the victim had in fact been a virgin). In many Muslim countries, women are being killed or cruelly punished by their fathers and brothers, if they stain the “family honour” with pre-marital sexual experience. But also French Muslim women of foreign origin are suffering pressure and harassment from their traditional families and communities. Caught between two worlds – the liberal European society and the deeply religious and restrictive society of their families - this operation is for many the last escape route.

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**THE SCIENCE SEGMENT**

**EARTH’S HISTORY**

**Time Event**

**13,700,000,000 BIG BANG!**

**13,350,000,000 First stars form.**

**4,570,000,000 Sun.**

**4,500,000,000 Earth.**

**4,450,000,000 Moon formed about 40,000 miles away.**

**3,750,000,000 Single-celled organisms in the sea (prokaryotes & eukaryotes).**

**2,300,000,000 Oxygen in atmosphere increases; mitochondria develop.**

**570,000,000 Multi-celled ocean-dwellers (sponges; later, trilobites).**

**460,000,000 Land plants.**

**400,000,000 Insects.**

**367,000,000 Trees.**

**350,000,000 Fish left the ocean (Amphibians).**

**300,000,000 Reptiles. Herbivores.**

**250,000,000 90% of all species on Earth were destroyed!**

**240,000,000 Dinosaurs branch off from other reptiles.**

**220,000,000 Primitive Mammals branch off from reptiles.**

**200,000,000 Pangaea begins to break apart.**

**170,000,000 Birds (branch off from dinosaurs).**

**130,000,000 Flowering plants (angiosperms).**

**80,000,000 Modern placental mammals.**

**70,000,000 First primates.**

**65,000,000 50-90% of all animal species destroyed; dinosaurs go extinct.**

**30,000,000 Monkeys & Apes.**

**20,000,000 Grass.**

**3,000,000 Ape-like men.**

**465,000 Fire used for cooking and heating.**

**400,000 Use of weighted spears with blades.**

**200,000 Homo sapiens.**

**200,000 Treatment of skins for clothing.**

**110,000 Ice Age.**

**80,000 Sophisticated fishing tackle. Musical instruments.**

**60,000 Painting & Sculpture.**

**30,000 Cro-magnons probably eliminated the Neanderthals.**

**10,000 Cultivation of plants. Domestication of animals.**

**Permanent settlements (villages).**

**5,000 Sumerians invent glue.**

**4,004 God created the earth.**

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**FAMOUS QUOTES**

**BRUCE LEE (NOVEMBER 27, 1940 - JULY 20, 1973) AGE 32**

**Bruce Lee** was an [American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States)-born [martial artist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martial_artist), [philosopher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosopher), [instructor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sifu), [martial arts actor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martial_arts_actor) and the founder of the [Jeet Kune Do](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeet_Kune_Do) combat form. He was widely regarded as the most influential [martial artist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martial_artist) of the twentieth century and a [cultural icon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_icon). He was also the father of actor [Brandon Lee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brandon_Lee) and of actress [Shannon Lee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shannon_Lee).

Lee was born in [San Francisco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Francisco%2C_California), [California](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California) and raised in [Hong Kong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong). His Hong Kong and [Hollywood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hollywood)-produced [films](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film) elevated the traditional [Hong Kong martial arts film](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong_action_cinema) to a new level of popularity and acclaim, and sparked the first major surge of interest in [Chinese martial arts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_martial_arts) in the [West](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_world). The direction and tone of his films changed and influenced [martial arts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martial_arts) and martial arts films in [Hong Kong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong) and the rest of the world as well. Lee became an iconic figure particularly to the [Chinese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_people), as he portrayed [Chinese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China) national pride and [Chinese nationalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_nationalism) in his movies. He primarily practiced [Chinese martial arts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_martial_arts) (Kung Fu).

**BRUCE DID NOT FIGHT PROFESSIONALLY. HOWEVER, HIS SKILLS WERE HIGHLY-REGARDED BY PROFESSIONAL FIGHTERS BOTH IN BOXING AND IN THE MARTIAL ARTS.**

**QUOTE FROM BRUCE LEE:**

**“A wise man can learn more from a foolish question**

**than a fool can learn from a wise answer.”**