JANUARY 30, 2011 THESKEPTICARENA.COM

2 SHOWS AGO I SHREDDED THE FRIENDLY ATHEIST (HEMANT MEHTA) FOR HIS AMBUSH OF A WELL INTENTIONED CHRISTIAN (BRAD WHITE) WHO DIDN'T NECESSARILY AGREE WITH EVERY DETAIL OF HEMANT'S STAND ON GAY MARRIAGE. AFTER THE INTERVIEW, HEMANT SENT HIS FOLLOWERS AFTER BRAD, WITH THE DIRECTIVE: "LET'S EDUCATE HIM."

ONE OF HIS FOLLOWERS, CRAIG JAMES, THEN OBEDIENTLY SENT BRAD THE FOLLOWING EMAIL. I THEN SENT BRAD THE SAME EMAIL (FROM CRAIG) WITH MY COMMENTS ADDED.

Brad said:

On homosexuality: "Homosexuality is a sin (It is a sin, just like many other sins heterosexual sinners commit everyday, but we are not allowed to say it.)"

Craig James:

In other words, God says you're a sinner, but we'll put up with you and feel sorry for you and treat you with respect, like we would any defective person.

BRAD, AND HOW IS CRAIG ANY DIFFERENT?

HE LOOKS AT CHRISTIANS AND DECIDES HE WILL PUT UP WITH THEM (AS LONG AS THEY KEEP THEIR MOUTHS SHUT ABOUT THEIR BELIEFS), AND FEEL SORRY FOR THEM, AND TREAT THEM WITH RESPECT (WELL, WE ATHEISTS RARELY DO THAT, DO WE? AS CRAIG PROVES IN THIS LETTER), LIKE HE WOULD ANY ~~DEFECTIVE PERSON~~ DELUSIONAL LITTLE FREAK.

"IN OTHER WORDS" - THAT IS THE CLASSIC OPENING FOR THE ALWAYS RELIABLE STRAW MAN ARGUMENT WHERE CRAIG WILL RESTATE YOUR POSITION IN WORDS THAT ARE SUPPOSED TO BE EQUIVALENT TO WHAT YOU SAID.

AS YOU CAN SEE - THEY NEVER ARE.

Brad White Clarification:

The point I was making is it is NOT valid for heterosexual Christians to judge homosexuals as if we are somehow better (sin-less). The context of the article was about the reactions that non-christians have to our words, and how if we even say “homosexuality is a sin”, then the conversation is over. I was sharing some of the things learned from comments on friendlyatheist.com.

On Atheism: "How questions were answered, in many ways, increased their superficiality and led to their lack of belief. ... Here is another quote from a conversation I had with another Atheist: 'When I was 12, the nun who was my teacher grabbed me and shook me while telling me I would go to hell if I didn’t stop making trouble by asking questions in catechism class.' The result is skepticism and disbelief…superficial faith. The result, more often than not, is a lost soul."

Craig James:

In other words, it's the Christian's fault that led to a lack of faith. The atheist's inquisitive mind, intellectual investigations and rational conclusions are unimportant.

BRAD, THAT IS ANOTHER STRAW MAN; HOW NICE OF CRAIG TO STAY CONSISTENT AND NOT CONFUSE US WITH A LOGICAL ARGUMENT.

YOUR EXAMPLE GAVE AN INSTANCE OF HOW ONE ATHEIST CAME TO LOSE FAITH. FROM THAT, SCARECROW TRIES TO IMPLY THAT YOU CLAIM THAT THE ATHEIST'S INQUISITIVE MIND, INTELLECTUAL INVESTIGATIONS, AND RATIONAL CONCLUSIONS ARE UNIMPORTANT.

I GUESS THE ONLY THING THAT REALLY MATTERS IS THAT, IN CRAIG'S MIND, THOSE TWO IDEAS ARE SOMEHOW LOGICALLY CONNECTED.

CRAIG'S MIND: FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN SO FAR, THAT HAS TO BE ONE SCARY PLACE.

AND NOT PARTICULARLY CROWDED.

Brad White Clarification:

The point I was making was to Christians…saying “look, you’ve got this inquisitive person in front of you asking good questions. They want real answers. Telling them to shut up, go away, get over it, just believe what I want you to believe is going to NOT satisfy them and it will only PUSH them farther away. The atheist has an incredibly powerful mind, and us Christians can’t respond to those people by saying “just believe what I say”. They must be addressed respectfully and given good, honest, thoughtful answers. Can the Christian have a positive or negative impact on the path of that person that is asking the question? Yes. Can the inquisitive person use their intellect and arrive at their own conclusion? Yes. If a Christian could actually go research the question and find a reasonable answer to the question, instead of just blowing the person off, could it help the person arrive at a reasonable conclusion that also validates their faith? (we will disagree on that one, but my answer is yes).

BRAD, STOP JACKING YOURSELF OFF. CRAIG IS NOT THE LEAST BIT INTERESTED IN WHAT YOU "MEANT." HIS ONLY INTEREST IS IN HOW HE CAN TWIST YOUR WORDS AROUND TO MEAN WHAT HE NEEDS THEM TO MEAN.

On hypocrisy. "However, the reason why hypocrisy is an issue in the Christian church is because we’re the ones preaching about living a more holy or pure lifestyle. You don’t hear many agnostics or atheists telling other people how to live."

Craig James:

In other words, atheists have no morals, so they can't be accused of hypocrisy! (I find this one to be particularly disgusting. The facts are so against Brad on this one.)

BRAD, EVERY TIME HE STARTS OFF WITH "IN OTHER WORDS" BRACE YOURSELF FOR ANOTHER STRAW MAN. YOU MIGHT REMEMBER THAT THAT LOGICAL FALLACY WAS HEMANT'S FAVORITE AS WELL.

SPEAKING OF HEMANT, SEE THE PHRASE "SO AGAINST BRAD?" WHY DOES CRAIG SPEAK IN THE LINGO OF A HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORE?

IF YOU GO TO HEMANT'S WEB SITE YOU WILL SEE THAT HEMANT SPEAKS THE SAME WAY. WHILE YOU'RE AT HEMANT'S SITE, YOU MIGHT ALSO NOTICE THAT HEMANT IS ADVERTISING THIS GUY'S BOOK FOR HIM.

WHAT YOU HAVE HERE IS ONE OF HEMANT'S GROUPIES.

BUT WHAT IS REALLY STRIKING IS HOW MUCH THEY THINK ALIKE. AS YOU MIGHT RECALL, HEMANT'S INTERVIEW WITH YOU WAS LACED WITH LOGICAL FALLACIES (MAINLY STRAW MEN).

CRAIG IS A "HEMANT WANNABE" (YOU SHOULD LOOK THAT WORD UP IN WICTIONARY TO GET THE FULL EFFECT). IT DESCRIBES THIS GUY BETTER THAN I EVER COULD. WELL OKAY, HERE'S THE DEFINITION:

"Someone who wishes to be or do something, but lacks the qualifications or talent; an overeager amateur ..."

WANNABE THEN MADE THE IRRATIONAL LEAP FROM "ATHEISTS DON'T TELL OTHERS HOW TO LIVE" TO "ATHEISTS HAVE NO MORALS" (YES, ANOTHER DAMN STRAW MAN).

THAT IS THE KIND OF FEEBLE REASONING I HAVE COME TO EXPECT FROM MOST CREATIONISTS, BUT AS CRAIG HAS JUST PROVEN, ATHEISTS CAN BE JUST AS FEEBLE.

HOW DOES CRAIG EQUATE "HAVING NO MORALS" TO "CAN'T BE ACCUSED OF HYPOCRISY?" WHY CAN'T PEOPLE WHO HAVE NO MORALS BE ACCUSED OF HYPOCRISY?

PROBABLY BECAUSE THERE EXIST NO SUCH PEOPLE. ASK EINSTEIN TO NAME ONE MENTALLY COMPETENT PERSON WITHOUT MORALS. HE CAN'T BECAUSE EVEN BAD MORALS ARE MORALS. EVERYONE HAS MORALS OF SOME KIND.

CRAIG DIDN'T BOTHER TO THINK THAT ONE OUT ANY MORE THAN HE DID ANYTHING ELSE HE WROTE. THAT IS BECAUSE ALL OF HIS ENERGY WENT INTO DISTORTING YOUR WORDS.

THIS GUY HAS THE MIND OF A PETULANT LITTLE BOY WHO THINKS HE IS WAY SMARTER THAN HE IS.

Brad White Clarification:

Atheists have morals. Never said they didn’t. Never suggested they don’t. But I’ll say it again. Christians by and large are the ones out there telling other people how we think they should live. The context was on fighting back hypocrisy among Christians. It’s hypocritical to even suggest how anyone else should live if we aren’t living by what we preach. The only hypocrisy I’ll claim against atheist is many atheists I’ve encountered act as if reason and logic and “the facts” are most important (I too think they are very important). Then, they (atheists) allow their own emotions, ego, and pre-conceptions to fog their interpretation of someone else’s words,…completely ignoring reason, logic, and “the facts”. But alas, I’m simply defending myself here. Someone else will have to take up the cause of hypocrisy within atheist circles.

On cursing. "Whereas in evolved cultures and societies common decency in communication is a virtue, the opposite is often true when talking with the other side ... You [Christians] are not allowed to be offended. Only they can be offended by your desire to be civil."

Craig James: In other words, atheists are often rude and foul-mouthed.

BRAD, HOW MANY STRAW MEN IS HE UP TO NOW?

THIS GUY MAKES HEMANT LOOK LIKE MR. SPOCK.

Brad White Clarification:

Yes, I will agree with you that some atheists are sometimes rude and foul-mouthed. I can’t claim that atheists have the corner on the market on that though. Christians are just as foul-mouthed from my experience. But no, your “in other words” are not my words. The context of the article you misinterpreted was again…what a chrisitian is not allowed to say in a conversation with atheists, because the words we use often cause irritation and retaliation and end discussions. I was attempting to help Christians stop the negative cycle. We (Christians) are not allowed to say “be nice, stop cussing, your words are offending me” even if those words are offensive. I believe that’s called Tone Trolling. It is interpreted as us applying our morals to you, and attempting to control you and censor your voice. And so, the atheist is OFFENDED and replies back to “go To to F-ing hell, don’t tell me what I can say, etc…”. And so, my point is that instead of being civil, what turns out to be virtue IS the cussing. We are not allowed to ask atheists to be polite (due to us being offended), and so we are told by Atheists what we are not allowed to say (because they are offended). For the record, cussing doesn’t offend me…and I’m a Christian. Say what you want J.

Craig, one of the problems I’m working on is how to bring our two sides together. We can’t do that if we misinterpret each other’s words and then go for the jugular. What I’d ask is if you have a concern over something I’ve said…ask me for a clarification before saying “in other words, brad is saying…”. I’m happy to hear YOUR words on a topic, but don’t tell me what I’m saying. That’s my job.

BRAD, YOUR JACKING OFF AGAIN. CLOWN DOESN'T HAVE THE LEAST INTEREST IN UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU ARE SAYING. HIS CONSTANT USE OF STRAW MAN ARGUMENTS PROVE THAT HIS ONLY INTEREST IS IN INTENTIONALLY MISREPRESENTING YOU.

SINCE HE DOESN'T POSSESS THE, HOW CAN I PUT THIS GENTLY, OH TO HELL WITH IT - THE MENTAL CAPACITY TO CONFRONT YOUR STATEMENTS, HE CREATES RIDICULOUS DISHONEST MISREPRESENTATIONS OF YOUR STATEMENTS AND THEN ATTACKS THOSE - HENCE THE NAME "STRAW MAN ARGUMENTS."

The above is what I left as comment on your site. I’m sure you are very nice.

COME ON BRAD, THIS GUY IS A DICK. HE IS NOT INTERESTED IN ANY KIND OF A DIALOGUE. NOR IS HE MENTALLY CAPABLE OF ENGAGING IN ONE, AS HE HAS JUST DEMONSTRATED.

And I’m sure you are incredibly bright. (sincerely).

BRAD, I AM GOING TO KICK YOUR ASS (SINCERELY).

THIS GUY IS ABOUT AS BRIGHT AS RAY COMFORT.

I’ve not met many atheists that didn’t pride themselves on being intellectually gifted. (as a former atheist myself, I can relate).

WELL BRAD, YOU GOT HIM EXACTLY RIGHT ON THAT PART. HE OBVIOUSLY CONSIDERS HIMSELF QUITE THE INTELLECTUAL.

BUT THEN AGAIN ... SO DOES RAY COMFORT.

I hope we can continue a conversation if you are open to it. I’ll actually be talking with Hemant this evening on my way home from work. Phone conversations are so much better because misunderstandings can be cleared up real time. Take care.

BRAD, I DON'T THINK A TELEPHONE CALL IS GOING TO WORK ON THIS SLUG.

HEMANT ... MAYBE.

BUT THIS GUY DOESN'T HAVE ANY REDEEMING QUALITIES.

OH YEAH ... I ALMOST FORGOT ABOUT THE JUGGLING.

NEO

THESKEPTICARENA.COM

ALSO SEE:

HTTP://THESKEPTICARENA.COM/ARCHIVES.ASPX

(SHOW #135)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

NEXT, I SAW A SECOND RESPONSE TO BRAD ON CRAIG'S WEB SITE.

CRAIG'S STATEMENTS ARE FOLLOWED BY MY COMMENTS.

More re: Changing the Face of Christianity

Monday I wrote a fairly harsh blog condemning the web site Changing the Face of Christianity.

CRAIG, I WOULDN'T CALL IT "HARSH" SO AS MUCH AS I WOULD CALL IT "IRRATIONAL" BECAUSE IT SET A NEW OLYMPIC RECORD FOR THE CREATION OF STRAW MEN IN A SINGLE ESSAY.

Brad White, the site's author, was kind enough to reply in detail, and he made some good points that I'd like to address today. Today I'm responding via an open letter to Brad, the site's founder and author.

Dear Brad,

In your comments to my blog, you argued that I essentially missed many of your points, and that I was assuming far too much about your opinions. In a nutshell, you pointed out that I was putting words in your mouth, claiming that you said things that you never said and don't believe. And I confess, that's exactly what I did. Guilty as charged.

CRAIG - MY SPIDER SENSES ARE TINGLING.

But I'm still going to claim I was right to do so!

MY COMMENT: I KNEW IT.

How can that be?

CRAIG, ACTUALLY, I WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE AMAZED IF YOU HADN'T CLAIMED YOU WERE RIGHT. YOUR FIRST EMAIL GAVE EVERYONE A PRETTY SCARY PICTURE OF HOW YOUR MIND WORKS; SO IT IS NOT THAT MUCH OF A STRETCH TO FIGURE THAT YOU WOULD FIND A WAY TO CLAIM YOU ARE RIGHT ... EVEN WHEN YOU ARE WRONG.

How can I claim that my inaccurate portrayal of your opinions and thoughts is actually right?

CRAIG, I'M TINGLING WITH AN-TICI-PA-TION.

I have done a great deal of GUI ("graphical user interface") design in my career. I create computer programs and web sites that customers use to buy stuff, run scientific experiments, enter a screenwriting competition, buy my book, and many other things. One of the most humbling experiences I've ever had to endure was when I was forced to sit silently and watch users struggle with a wonderful new program I'd just finished designing. I was sure that my GUI was dead obvious, that any fool could sit down and immediately get the job done.

Instead, I watched the user make gross mistakes. They couldn't figure out where to enter information, what button to click next, how to navigate to the "shopping cart", or how to upload their screenplay. Whatever it was I was trying to achieve, the users would fail to figure it out. I wanted to jump up and shout, "No you fool, click THAT button!" But the rules of these GUI tests are strict: I was like the fly on the wall, prohibited from saying a word. I had to watch and see for myself all the different ways that my design was inadequate. It was humbling.

WELL CRAIG, YOU'VE CERTAINLY FIGURED OUT A WAY TO AVOID THAT FEELING HAVEN'T YOU?

SIMPLY NEVER ADMIT YOU ARE WRONG AND YOU WILL NEVER HAVE TO FEEL HUMBLED AGAIN.

PRETTY SLICK CRAIG.

When the test was over, I'd take my proverbial hat in hand and go back to the drawing board.

CRAIG, THAT IS WHAT YOU SHOULD HAVE DONE WHEN YOU GOT BRAD'S REPLY POINTING OUT ALL OF YOUR LOGIC ERRORS.

How is this relevant to the debate about your web site that encourages Christian reform?

CRAIG - IT ISN'T.

BUT I'M SURE YOU'VE FIGURED OUT A WAY TO MAKE IT SEEM SO.

Because when someone misinterprets my design, I am always wrong. The point of a commercial web site is to sell stuff. If a customer wants to buy my product and fails, it's always my fault. I can jump up and down and say, "But it's OBVIOUS how to do it ... look here, I'll show you. Anyone should be able to figure this out!" That's a completely, one hundred percent useless argument, because I still would lose the sale. And I'll lose the next, sale, and the sale after that too, because no matter what I meant my GUI design to do, the customer couldn't figure it out and didn't buy the product.

So that's why my misinterpretation of your web site is important. Your goal is to make Christians more sensitive to non-Christians, and your web site is your "GUI".

SO CRAIG, IF HIS WEB SITE IS DIRECTED AT CHRISTIANS, WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH YOU?

It's the only way you get to present your message. If it doesn't work, then it doesn't matter what your intent was. All that matters is the feelings that your readers have by the time they leave your web site.

Since I'm a non-Christian, it seems I'm your intended customer, or at least the "customer" of those Christians who heed your advice.

CRAIG, GO WITH THE SECOND PART.

And since I was offended by many of the things I read, it doesn't matter what your intent was.

CRAIG, YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS?

THAT IS THE MOST ABSURD REASONING I HAVE EVER WITNESSED - AND I DEAL WITH CREATIONISTS ALL THE TIME. YOU ARE MAKING EVEN THEM LOOK SMART.

I'LL BET ANYTHING THAT YOU ARE ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO THINK THAT RIOTING MUSLIMS WHO KILLED DOZENS OVER THE DUTCH CARTOONS WERE FREAKIN NUTS - AND YOU WOULD BE RIGHT.

BUT ACCORDING TO THE LOGIC YOU JUST TRIED TO PULL ON BRAD, IF SOMEONE IS OFFENDED, THEY ARE RIGHT REGARDLESS OF THE INTENTION.

YOU HAVE JUST WON ANOTHER OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL IN THE "INCONSISTENT THINKING" EVENT.

THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU FAIL TO LEARN CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS. IN THIS CASE YOU CREATED A FALSE ANALOGY (ONE OF THE WORST I'VE EVER SEEN): YOU ARE REQUIRED TO WRITE YOUR PROGRAMS TO THE LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR IF YOU WANT TO BE SUCCESSFUL; THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH EXCUSING PEOPLE WHO "CHOOSE" TO BE OFFENDED WHERE NO OFFENSE WAS INTENDED. THERE IS NO LOGICAL WAY TO CONNECT THOSE TWO IDEAS.

WHEN YOU GO TO SUCH GREAT LENGTHS TO RATIONALIZE YOUR MISTAKES, YOU MAKE YOURSELF LOOK PATHETIC. YOU SHOULD HAVE STOPPED THIS ESSAY AT THE POINT WHERE YOU SAID, "GUILTY AS CHARGED," AND MAYBE ADDED AN APOLOGY. INSTEAD YOU DID YOUR BEST IMITATION OF AN 8 YEAR OLD LITTLE BOY, CAUGHT WITH HIS HAND IN THE COOKIE JAR.

NOT VERY IMPRESSIVE FOR A GROWN MAN.

Both Hemant and I, along with several other atheist bloggers, came away with the same impression.

CRAIG, THEN MAYBE YOU GUYS SHOULD CONSIDER 'GROUP' COUNSELLING. THAT WAY YOU MIGHT GET A DISCOUNT.

We all found many of the things you say offensive.

CRAIG, THAT IS CALLED "APPEAL TO POPULARITY." IT IS IRRELEVANT THAT YOU CAN FIND OTHERS, EQUALLY DEVOID OF LOGIC SKILLS, TO SUPPORT YOUR MISREPRESENTATIONS.

CRAIG, REREAD YOUR LAST 2 SENTENCES BUT REPLACE THE NAMES WITH CREATIONISTS AND READ IT AS IF THEY WERE ADDRESSING YOU. WOULD THEIR ARGUMENT STILL BE VALID? NO, YOU WOULD REJECT IT. IT IS AN ARGUMENT BASED ON A LOGICAL FALLACY AND IS INVALID FROM ANY PERSPECTIVE, ATHEIST OR CHRISTIAN.

Having corresponded with you privately and in this forum, I know your intentions are good,

AND THAT CRAIG, IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOU AND BRAD: HE CAME TO HEMANT'S INTERVIEW TRUSTING TO BE TREATED FAIRLY. INSTEAD HE GOT AMBUSHED BY ATHEISTS WHO TWISTED EVERYTHING HE SAID.

but your web site isn't conveying that message.

CRAIG, JUST BECAUSE YOU REFUSE TO ADMIT THAT HIS WEB SITE IS CONVEYING THE MESSAGE HE INTENDS, DOESN'T MEAN THAT YOU ARE RIGHT - IT ONLY MEANS THAT YOU REFUSE TO ADMIT IT; THE SAME WAY YOU REFUSE TO ADMIT THAT WHAT YOU DID TO BRAD WAS WRONG.

I hope you'll continue with your efforts, and I hope that my critique and the critiques from other atheist/humanist bloggers will help you to further your worthy mission.

CRAIG, ABOUT THE ONLY THING YOUR CRITIQUE ACCOMPLISHED WAS TO PUSH AWAY THOSE CHRISTIANS WILLING TO WORK WITH ATHEISTS IN REINING IN THE FUNDAMENTALISTS WHO ARE THREATENING OUR SCHOOLS, GOVERNMENT, AND WAY OF LIFE.

NICE GOING COOL.

Best regards,

Craig

HAVE A NICE DAY,

neo

PS: CRAIG,

 I WISH YOU WOULD FIND CHRIST,

 BECAUSE YOU'RE MAKING OUR SIDE LOOK REALLY BAD.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

NOW FOR A BRIEF CRITICAL THINKING LESSON. HERE IS A LIST OF A COUPLE DOZEN INSULTS AND NAMES THAT I THREW AT CRAIG DURING THE 2 EMAILS:

HIS MIND IS ONE SCARY PLACE ... AND NOT PARTICULARLY CROWDED.

SPEAKS IN THE LINGO OF A HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORE.

ONE OF HEMANT'S GROUPIES.

A "HEMANT WANNABE"

REASONING SKILLS AS FEEBLE AS A CREATIONIST.

EINSTEIN (IN THE SARCASTIC SENSE).

A PETULANT LITTLE BOY WHO THINKS HE IS WAY SMARTER THAN HE IS.

A CLOWN.

DOESN'T POSSESS THE MENTAL CAPACITY TO CONFRONT BRAD'S STATEMENTS.

AS BRIGHT AS RAY COMFORT.

CONSIDERS HIMSELF QUITE THE INTELLECTUAL.

A SLUG.

NO REDEEMING QUALITIES.

IRRATIONAL.

MAKES CREATIONISTS LOOK SMART.

WON AN OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL IN THE "INCONSISTENT THINKING" EVENT.

FAILED TO LEARN CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS.

CREATED ONE OF THE WORST FALSE ANALOGIES I'VE EVER SEEN.

PATHETIC.

DID AN IMITATION OF AN 8 YEAR OLD LITTLE BOY, CAUGHT WITH HIS HAND IN THE COOKIE JAR.

NEEDS 'GROUP' COUNSELLING.

DEVOID OF LOGIC SKILLS.

HOPE HE FINDS CHRIST, BECAUSE HE'S MAKING OUR SIDE LOOK REALLY BAD.

NOW REFERRING TO "AD HOMINEM" ATTACKS IN WIKIPEDIA:

"Gratuitous verbal abuse or "name-calling" itself is not an ad hominem or a logical fallacy."

ONLY WHEN INSULTS, ETC. ARE USED IN SUPPORT OF A PREMISE DO THEY BECOME LOGICAL FALLACIES.

NOW, IF I USED THE TACTIC THAT CRAIG PULLED ON BRAD, I WOULD USE THAT DEFINITION TO EXCUSE MYSELF, AVOID ANY RESPONSIBILITY, AND END THE TOPIC.

HOWEVER, UNLIKE CRAIG WHO REFUSED TO ACCEPT THAT BRAD HAD PROVEN HIM WRONG, I WILL ADMIT THAT TO USE ALL OF THOSE INSULTS, WHILE NOT LOGICALLY INVALID, WAS ... IMMATURE.

THAT IS HOW CRAIG SHOULD HAVE RESPONDED TO BRAD. BE A MAN (SORRY LADIES), OWN UP TO YOUR MISTAKES, AND MOVE ON.

NOTE: I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY INDICATION THAT HEMANT HAS ANY INTENTION OF DOING THAT EITHER; BUT THAT IS NOT SURPRISING WHEN YOU REALIZE THE BLUEPRINT FROM WHICH CRAIG WORKS.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

98.6 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT IDEAL TEMPERATURE FOR KEEPING FUNGI AWAY AND FOOD AT BAY

TWO RESEARCHERS AT THE ALBERT EINSTEIN COLLEGE OF MEDICINE AT YESHIVA UNIVERSITY HAVE FOUND THAT OUR 98.6° F BODY TEMPERATURE STRIKES A PERFECT BALANCE: WARM ENOUGH TO WARD OFF FUNGAL INFECTION BUT NOT SO HOT THAT WE NEED TO EAT NONSTOP TO MAINTAIN OUR METABOLISM.

ONE OF THE MYSTERIES ABOUT HUMANS AND OTHER ADVANCED MAMMALS HAS BEEN WHY THEY ARE SO HOT COMPARED WITH OTHER ANIMALS. THIS STUDY HELPS TO EXPLAIN WHY MAMMALIAN TEMPERATURES ARE ALL AROUND 98.6°.

THE RESEARCH BUILDS UPON EARLIER WORK SHOWING THAT THE NUMBER OF FUNGAL SPECIES THAT CAN THRIVE AND THEREFORE INFECT AN ANIMAL DECLINES BY 6 PERCENT FOR EVERY 2° RISE IN TEMPERATURE. THIS MEANS THAT TENS OF THOUSANDS OF FUNGAL SPECIES INFECT REPTILES, AMPHIBIANS AND OTHER COLD-BLOODED ANIMALS, BUT ONLY A FEW HUNDRED HARM MAMMALS. SUCH PROTECTION AGAINST FUNGAL INFECTION COULD HAVE BEEN CRUCIAL FOR THE TRIUMPH OF MAMMALS FOLLOWING THE AGE OF DINOSAURS.

RESEARCHERS DEVISED A MATHEMATICAL MODEL THAT ANALYZED THE BENEFITS GAINED BY BODY TEMPERATURES THAT PROTECT AGAINST FUNGI VERSUS THE COSTS (IN TERMS OF EXTRA FOOD CONSUMPTION) REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN BODY TEMPERATURES BETWEEN 30° AND 40° C. THE OPTIMAL TEMPERATURE FOR MAXIMIZING BENEFITS WHILE MINIMIZING COSTS WAS FOUND TO BE 36.7° C, WHICH CLOSELY APPROXIMATES NORMAL BODY TEMPERATURE.

THIS STUDY IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF HOW MAMMALIAN EVOLUTION HAS BEEN DRIVEN BY BOTH EXTERNAL BIOLOGICAL FACTORS AND INTERNAL PHYSIOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

FAMOUS QUOTES

THOMAS PAINE

"BELIEF IN A CRUEL GOD MAKES A CRUEL MAN."

"OF ALL THE TYRANNIES THAT AFFLICT MANKIND, TYRANNY IN RELIGION IS THE WORST. EVERY OTHER SPECIES OF TYRANNY IS LIMITED TO THE WORLD WE LIVE IN, BUT THIS ATTEMPTS A STRIDE BEYOND THE GRAVE AND SEEKS TO PURSUE US INTO ETERNITY."