

Logical Fallacy Tarot cards

By Editor

Art by **Melissa Bather**

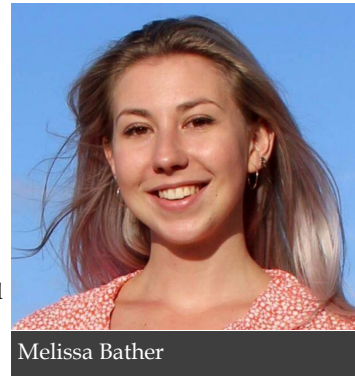
At the 2019 NZ Skeptics conference I had the pleasure of meeting a student of Applied Mathematics and Statistics and SGU fan, Melissa Bather. I was impressed by her fan art of the SGU which she presented to them at the Gala Dinner. Luckily, we were dining at the same table in the Great hall, (along with two speakers – Jacinta Cording and Cara Santa Maria!) and Melissa and I got to talking.

So, out of the blue and with a surge of hopeful enthusiasm, I decided to ask if she'd be interested in working on a project I've been thinking about for a while, to illustrate logical fallacies for the New Zealand Skeptics society. Happily, Melissa said yes, and the results are the striking graphics you see below.

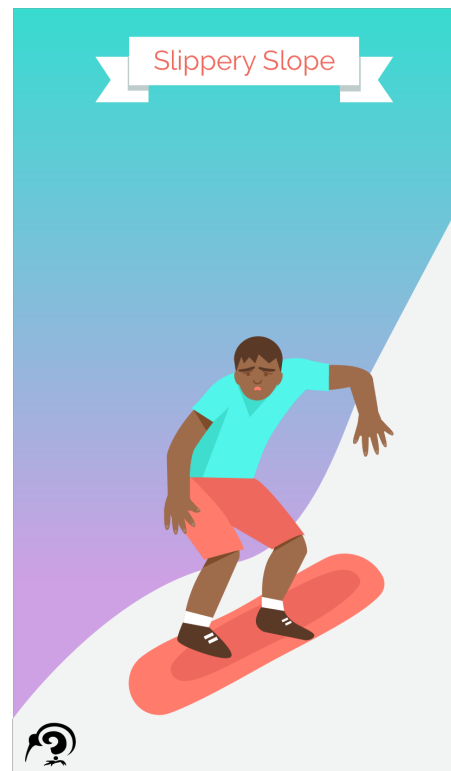
As objects of art, to enjoy for their symbolism, and just because they are attractive, I've long had a thing for tarot

cards. The problem I have with them though, is that they can be used by people to extract money from people looking for answers, who might be suffering from financial issues, medical problems, loneliness, trouble at work, basically those who really could least afford it.

To expand on the brief, I forwarded Melissa some examples of Tarot cards which I really like by artist Yoshi Yoshitani, and the latest card game for critical thinkers by Rationality Rules YouTuber Stephen Woodford called



Melissa Bather



'Debunked'. What I had in mind was the best of both worlds – the beauty and colour of the tarot cards, but with the critical thinking message of the logical fallacy cards. Another positive point about tarot cards is, they are all about the image, and with few words leave it up to the reader to unearth and interpret the message of the card, translating that message to the seeker of knowledge. I hope these fallacy cards with their simple style and attractive colours will pull viewers in and invite discussion around the topics, promoting our key message of critical thinking.

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What are these logical fallacies anyway?

Burden of Proof

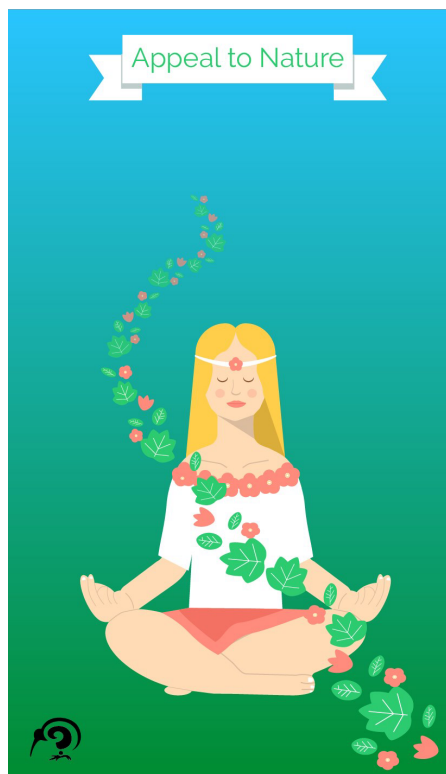
The fallacy here is that people making extraordinary claims often ask those who are skeptical to provide proof that their claim isn't valid. On the contrary it must be up to the person making the extraordinary claim to provide the evidence to support it. The need to provide proof is their burden alone. So, if your cousin says pink fluffy unicorns ate your cheesecake, it's not up to you to disprove it, it's up to them to prove it.

Appeal to Nature

This is the fallacy that if something is natural it is inherently good or better than a man-made or processed alternative. This is objectively not true, and an example I like to share to illustrate this involves raw milk, pasteurisation, and listeria.

Slippery Slope

A slippery slope argument is when someone says that as a result of allowing this minor thing to happen now, soon major or tragic events will happen as a result of the minor thing. For example, if you let one skeptic into a church, before you know it everyone will become an atheist and civilisation itself will come crashing down.



Have a skeptical tarot reading

1. In pairs, choose a conspiracy theory, or outrageous claim for the other person to debunk.
2. Set a deadline to look into the claim. Tips for researching: know your sources, what do the experts say? What do the skeptics say? Know your logical fallacies!
3. Select your cards. Unlike a tarot reading, you need to use your critical thinking skills to select the appropriate logical fallacy to debunk the claim.
4. Set the scene. Sort out the lighting, prepare your favourite beverages, get some snacks and get comfy.
5. Take turns to give a 'reading' by laying out the cards one at a time. Talk through why that logical fallacy applies.
6. Be prepared to get questions, and back up your card choices with the facts.
7. Have fun! □