

An Analogy

Post by “Joshua” of March 9, 2020 at 7:12 PM

One of my absurd little pastimes is to wrangle intellectually with the arguments put forward by the Flat-Earthers. Working now in land-surveying, the question is bound to emerge—and so it does.

When a control network (that is, a set of known control points) is laid out by a government Geodetic survey team, it is laid out with the precise mathematical understanding that the Earth is a spheroid. A later survey within the territory of this network will be conducted using plane coordinates; any given parcel is small enough so that convergence error from round to flat is negligible.

Enter the Flat-Earther; "if every parcel is laid out using plane coordinates, then a line of these parcels together prove that the Earth is flat."

Not so—because each parcel is tied in to two known local control points on the control network, the curvature is "baked in". It gets corrected every time you move to the next control point.

The Aesthetic Life—What Kierkegaard Gets Wrong

"In the bottomless ocean of pleasure, I have sounded in vain for a spot to cast an anchor. I have felt the almost irresistible power with which one pleasure drags another after it, the kind of adulterated enthusiasm which it is capable of producing, the boredom, the torment which follow."

-Søren Kierkegaard, Journal

The observation made by Kierkegaard in this passage is part of a broader argument; he believes that pleasure-seeking—in his terms, the "Aesthetic Life"—is doomed to failure. Pleasure is not sufficient, in his view, to satisfy mankind's total nature. For Kierkegaard, this meant a return to a philosophically-bolstered Christianity.

And so we must ask ourselves; *where did he go wrong?*

In my view, his main problem is a misunderstanding of terms. He thinks that he tested the pleasure-principle, and that he found where it failed. What he actually found, in my own view, was that *the heedless pursuit of pleasure extrapolates dissatisfaction rather than mollifying it*. How is that so?

It's simple: he failed to refer each pleasure back to his philosophical control network. This is the meaning of choice and avoidance; if he had remembered the Principle Doctrines, it might have prevented some mistakes!