

Billboards

Nobody asked but ...

I passed two billboards on the way to work this morning. I have been passing one of them for maybe a year now, and it asks "Heaven or Hell?" Today there was another one, a recruiting billboard for the US Marine Corps. The new one (USMC) headlines the bold word "COMMITMENT," then asks the rhetorical question, "Can you commit to something that is bigger than yourself?" (paraphrased). And while we're describing, the former billboard asks something like, "can you decide before you go to bed tonight?"

Non sequitur — From the Latin phrase *nōn sequitur* ("it does not follow"), from *nōn* ("not") + *sequitur* (third-person form of *sequor* ("I follow")) [Wiktionary]

1. Any abrupt and inexplicable transition or occurrence.

*Having a costumed superhero abduct the vicar was an utter **non sequitur** in the novel.*

2. Any invalid argument in which the conclusion cannot be logically deduced from the premises; a logical fallacy.

3. A statement that does not logically follow a statement that came before it.

A **false dilemma** (also called **black-and/or-white thinking**, **bifurcation**, **denying a conjunct**, the **either-or fallacy**, **false dichotomy**, **fallacy of exhaustive hypotheses**, the **fallacy of false choice**, the **fallacy of the false alternative**, or the **fallacy of the excluded middle**) is a type of informal fallacy that involves a situation in which limited alternatives are considered, when in fact there is at least one additional option. The opposite of this fallacy is argument to moderation. [Wikipedia]

Heaven and Hell are not mutually exclusive, there is a vast excluded middle even if the terminals are not fictitious. And there has been no case made for when and why a person might constructively contemplate these poles. Commitment is not well-defined by the implied choice — to join a group and give it your all. If a thing requires your commitment then that thing is dependent on you and cannot be greater than you. The human mind operates on non sequiturs the same way it resolves all puzzles — it takes what is given and tries to make a whole of it. These billboards, however, are cloaking devices to make non-choices to seem like choices. Fraud, and deception, and false witness are types of behavior which are violent whether they are deliberate or not.

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