

A ‘Sly Jezebel’: The Vicarious Hypothesis

The LaRouche Basement Team of science researchers has posted an explanation (with animated graphics) of Johannes Kepler’s term “the vicarious hypothesis” at the science [section](#) of [www.larouchepac.com](#).

To introduce the concept, here are Kepler’s own words. Writing in *The New Astronomy*, his breakthrough work in which the true, elliptical orbit of the planets was first identified, Kepler addressed the reader, who has been struggling as Kepler leads him down one false track after another, replicating the scientist’s own “war” with the planet Mars: “But, my good man, if I were concerned with results, I could have avoided all this work, being content with the vicarious hypothesis. Be it known, therefore, that these errors are going to be our path to the truth. . . .

“[O]ur false supposition, although it does put the planet in the right longitudinal position at the right

time, does not give it the right altitude. . . .

“Further, even considering the longitude alone, the lack of any perceptible difference in effects between the as yet unknown true hypothesis and the false one assumed by us does not make the effect identical. For there can be a small discrepancy which the senses do not perceive. . . .

“This mutual tempering of various influences causes one error to compensate for another, brings the calculation within the limits of observational precision, and makes it impossible to perceive the falsity of this particular hypothesis. And so this sly Jezebel cannot gloat over the dragging of truth (a most chaste maiden) into her bordello. Any honest woman following this

false predecessor would stay closely in her tracks owing to the narrowness of the streets and the press of the crowd, and the stupid, bleary-eyed professors of the subtleties of logic, who cannot tell a candid appearance from a shameless one, judge her to be the liar’s maidservant.”



Johannes Kepler
(1571-1630)