

The Tardigrade, Time Bandits, Another Fallacy



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"Finding the Challenges" is an original column appearing every other Wednesday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Verbal Vol. Verbal is a software engineer, college professor, corporate information officer, life long student, farmer, libertarian, literarian, student of computer science and self-ordering phenomena. Archived columns can be found [here](#). FTC-only RSS feed available [here](#).

This column I will share with you my intellectual love affair with the new *Cosmos*, starring Neil deGrasse Tyson. And since we are on "a space-time" adventure, I will move over to the very mysterious dimension known as time, in our everyday discussions. To finish up this edition of FTC, we will explore another logical fallacy, and its recognition as an important voluntaryist skill — in particular, we're talking about throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

Tardigrade

In the latest episode (that I have watched) of *Cosmos: A Space-time Odyssey*, Dr. Tyson introduced us to the tardigrade, a pinhead sized creature who lives in water drops. There are inconceivable numbers of these creatures. Some say there are more than a billion for each human individual, yet no tardigrade occupies the same space and time, and each has a unique existence. Neither can a tardigrade be in two places at once, nor two times at once. The very physics of existence is such that every thing is an individual instance, every thing is autonomous. This idea in no way denies interaction between or among things.

"No individualist or libertarian denies that people influence each other all the time, and surely there is nothing wrong with this inevitable process. What libertarians are opposed to is not voluntary persuasion, but the coercive imposition of values by the use of force and police power. Libertarians are in no way opposed to the voluntary cooperation and collaboration between individuals: only to the compulsory pseudo-'cooperation' imposed by the state." – F. A. Hayek

Individuals interact, but there is no natural law mandating collective joint action. I don't know whether this means *free will*, or any other abstraction. I observe that every tardigrade and every human operates in all practical instances in a seemingly infinite variety of ways.

Do the tardigrades have a constitution, by-laws, governments? My observation is, no. How then are they able to perpetuate themselves in volcanoes, in glaciers, and at the greatest depths of the sea? Who builds their roads?

Could it be that constitutions, by-laws, and governments are not necessary?

“The apology, that is constantly put forth for the injustice of government, viz., that a man must consent to give up some of his rights, in order to have his other rights protected – involves a palpable absurdity, both legally and politically.” – Lysander Spooner

One wonders when the human species will arise to the level of the tardigrade.

Time Bandits

The special role of dimensions is that these keep individuals unique. I wrote above to the effect that physical beings cannot share a location at a single time. In future columns we will look at various dimensions, but here we look at the first four dimensions: locus, length, depth, and time. In this section, we will specifically consider time. We often think of time as the fourth dimension, but in reality it is the partner dimension to any other dimension. All other dimensional reference is in regard to a point in time. This is amazing since time is very unlike most of the other dimensions — its observation is arbitrary — you cannot see it, you can only construct abstractions to mark its unobservable behavior.

Because of the nature of time, it can be stolen without observation. We could, at this point, describe every property misappropriation (theft) or violence, as the misappropriation of time. Therefore, I have captioned this section, “Time Bandits,” after a favorite (but not necessarily relevant) movie, to refer to those who would veil the past, the present, or the future, for wrongful gain, deliberately or inadvertently. The observations by these time bandits are valuable but false. The universe at any one time will have logic or it will not (therefore always logical because “not logical” is a verifiable logic construct, equal to “logical”).

As you can see, we can get bogged down in this philosophical area most quickly, so let's look at a few practical examples:

- You are asked to press 1 to have an automated call handled in Spanish. All callers must endure this transaction to proceed, but it also means that the owner of the voice system does not have to commit an employee to this time consuming task. The owner saves the cost of a full employee by unilaterally taking a small, perhaps not painful, dollop of the would-be customers' time.
- Traffic lights.
- Take a number, take a seat.
- Most math courses.

A dear, and late, friend once stood up in a business meeting and screamed, “you are wasting my life!” Of course, presumptive confiscation of time is a huge problem, but in this writing I am more concerned with the distortion of the record of time — the bias of historians. I find history absolutely fascinating, but it is only after having consumed major helpings of essays on history, that I have begun to see how distortion haunts every narrative. Historians seek to use my time to convince me to understand events in *their* way. If I, as a voluntarist, prefer to optimize my use of time, then I need to spend the time required to understand the filters that the historian brings. The same applies to every form of communication. The priesthood of history walks backward (relatively) through time. Their minds have a predetermined desire to make something of what they see into what they believe they will see in the future. But the cowls on their robes make seeing to the side — the present — or to the rear — the future — impossible.

Another Fallacy

Throwing the baby out with the bath water is a figurative description of mistaking the relationship between the general and the specific, but this only describes part of the phenomenon. In another view, it is a procedural mistake. All procedures must have product. In other words, a practice without an intended outcome is an empty event. For instance, the research and reporting of history has no function unless that procedure will result in truth, fact, order, understanding, and wisdom. For an example tied to the popular name of the logic fallacy, the procedure of bathing the baby is to have a clean and comfortable baby, while the disposal of dirty water is only a knock-on coincidence. When a law enforcement agency reports on an internal affairs investigation by concluding that the officers involved followed procedure, that is not a conclusion at all. It is an attempt to render an event empty.

It's a two-way street, the indelible connection between generality and *relevant* specificity, but we often end up going a third way — we focus on something that is not critical. We may throw the bathwater *and* the baby out because we don't like the baby — imagining the false connection that the baby has poisoned the bathwater. On the other hand, we may make a false analysis of a generality and proceed improperly — the baby seems to be

clean, so no bath is needed and therefore neither the bath nor the baby is needed.

The fact that a fallacy exists by an improper view of the relationship between specific and general means that we must always consider both. We must also see the distinction between process and product. We are bound by the natural law that no event is separable from its consequences — *all* of its consequences

The Universe is a system, and as *Cosmos* shows it is a system of systems. Often we can find the truth of an assumption, or the need for a presumption, by examining levels above and below the system in which we are contained. There are no systems in the Universe which require government. Natural laws suffice in all cases. As Spooner implies, intellections, to the contrary, are absurd. One of the intellections that we too often assume is that history itself is adequately reflected in a linear record, or that it has much to do with navigating the present, or that there is a dead certainty about the future that can be divined by a *careful enough* examination of time. The world is not divisible into neat categories (dimensions). It is useful to evaluate things (people, entities, places, events), but they need to be repacked to be of much use. Simplify to further understanding, but reconstruct to appreciate complexity.

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