

# Traveling, Spooner #15, Fallacies in General



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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](#).*

The things that I have loved about life are what I have learned from life, freely. The discoveries never stop. Language, numbers, navigation, logic, learning, music, physics, thought, *ad infinitum*. And I have learned to embrace the change.

## Traveling

The most fundamental freedom that any animal has is mobility — yes, voluntary mobility. The other two types of things, vegetables and minerals, have no choice, no volition — when they are moved any substantial distance it is not of their self-conscious motivation. Even natural lava flows and seed dispersal are not instituted on voluntary decisions by the subjects of those activities.

Often humans will express their freedom of movement in highly structured events characterized by vast complexes of division of labor and dizzying multitudes of choices. We call these events, "vacations."

When I was young, the two greatest gifts my parents gave to me were travel and freedom from religion. I will write about the latter in some future column, perhaps. But here I am talking about trains, boats, buses, autos, and planes. By the time I was 24, and had first become a parent myself, I had visited all 48 of the contiguous, continental states, plus Canada and Mexico. When I was 5 years old, I began to use the city bus system in Lexington KY, by myself. At 6, I and my 5-year-old sister flew alone to Washington DC. And only a few years later I was navigating the Boston MTA alone, mostly to get to Fenway Park to see the Red Sox, with side trips to the Fine Arts Museum.

As a toddler, I witnessed my mother desegregating the back seats of Chattanooga TN buses in reverse — a white woman refusing to leave the "for coloreds only" section. And we traveled more than once, by train, from Cincinnati's fantastic Art Deco Union Terminal

to Boston. When I was 6, we visited French-speaker parts of Quebec. Later, after half-a-century, my wife and I have been to Wales, New Zealand, Austria, the Panama Canal, Gibraltar, Bermuda, England, France, Switzerland, Italy, and Germany. We did Hawaii 5 years ago. Lin has been to Alaska, but I am still in the planning stage on that.

Freeing yourself from the state is not an easy thing, and it is a vast topical area. The government wants to know where you are at all times. I can't take a vacation to Canada, with my daughters, because they would not prefer to support the very expensive red tape and the hassle. The word "state" derives from the Latin, *status*, which refers to permanency, and the state prefers that you stay (again from the Latin root) in a defined state within the state — your papers, please! But we live in a mobile society, so the state has to figure a way to keep us pinned to a map of territories controlled by it. I will write more in the future on state incursion, but in this column I want to focus on the freeing elements of travel.

We had a vacation last week, to the beautiful low country of South Carolina, with my beautiful bride, our younger daughter, and her two daughters, aged 10 and 8. There were at least two defining events for me. The first was discovering that a kayak is a wonderful way to travel on water. I have been on a wide range of muscle-propelled and mechanically-propelled watercraft, but while the cultures of Europe and the Orient were inventing inefficient boats, the Eskimos were approaching perfection. The second event was observing how my granddaughters took everything in stride, including the 8-year-old handling a 5-foot brown snake in the swamp.

If you keep your mind open on your next vacation, you may see that life is a continuous evolution of ideas, wants, needs, goals, consequences, and self-ordering phenomena. You see markets, movement, things that can't move, and things that can. You re-shuffle the deck of people, places, things, and events. Travel is experience, experience is life, life is a vacation. Vacations are like chili recipes — there are no bad ones, it's just that some are better than others.

### **Spooner Quote #15**

I was pretty much bowled over recently when a Facebook friend referred to Lysander Spooner as an advocate of voting. This seems, to me, very incorrect. In my view, Spooner's take on fictional law was that it was defeated by an unsolvable chicken and egg problem. Heraclitus observed indelibly that one cannot step in the same river twice:

*You can never step into the same river; for new waters are always flowing on you.*

*No man ever steps into the same river twice, for it's not the same*

*river and he is not the same man.*

All things are dynamic, that is, they change constantly from creation through demise. Some will claim that there is both stasis and dynamism. But stasis is an absolute absence of dynamism, which is an impossibility. I will leave the proof of that hypothesis for the reader, as a homework assignment. The fact that “a state” is impossible never seems, however, to deter the politicians among us. They sell the snake oil of the *status quo* — the impossible dream of security. Voting is just small potatoes, nuts and bolts in the schemes of oligarchs.

Now, what does Spooner say about artificial law? Nature has laws, but humans have rules, regulations, legislation, and delusions of grandeur. Spooner also points out that any attempt to create governance is a futile attempt to gainsay Heraclitus’ observation. Any human-made “law” is an attempt to freeze a river. Humans in 1776 have no capacity to constrict, much less govern, a different set of humans in 2015.

My friend pointed to the following as a showing that Spooner may have considered voting, in some special regard:

**NT.6.2.7** *It cannot be said that, by voting, a man pledges himself to support the Constitution, unless the act of voting be a perfectly voluntary one on his part. Yet the act of voting cannot properly be called a voluntary one on the part of any very large number of those who do vote. It is rather a measure of necessity imposed upon them by others, than one of their own choice. On this point I repeat what was said in a former number, viz.:*

**NT.6.2.8** *In truth, in the case of individuals, their actual voting is not to be taken as proof of consent, even for the time being. On the contrary, it is to be considered that, without his consent having even been asked a man finds himself environed by a government that he cannot resist; a government that forces him to pay money, render service, and forego the exercise of many of his natural rights, under peril of weighty punishments. He sees, too, that other men practice this tyranny over him by the use of the ballot. He sees further, that, if he will but use the ballot himself, he has some chance of relieving*

*himself from this tyranny of others, by subjecting them to his own. In short, he finds himself, without his consent, so situated that, if he use the ballot, he may become a master; if he does not use it, he must become a slave. And he has no other alternative than these two. In self-defence, he attempts the former. His case is analogous to that of a man who has been forced into battle, where he must either kill others, or be killed himself. Because, to save his own life in battle, a man takes the lives of his opponents, it is not to be inferred that the battle is one of his own choosing. Neither in contests with the ballot – which is a mere substitute for a bullet – because, as his only chance of self-preservation, a man uses a ballot, is it to be inferred that the contest is one into which he voluntarily entered; that he voluntarily set up all his own natural rights, as a stake against those of others, to be lost or won by the mere power of numbers. On the contrary, it is to be considered that, in an exigency into which he had been forced by others, and in which no other means of self-defence offered, he, as a matter of necessity, used the only one that was left to him.*

So here's the scam that Spooner addresses — a small special-interest group convenes and figures out that they can more easily serve their self-interests by leveraging a much larger group. They deceive the larger group into believing that the self-interests of the clique are coincident with the interests of the masses. Then the sleight of hand gets fast and furious — the in-crowd persuades the out-crowd that the innies will watch out for the outies — and they call it representative government. What could go wrong? Then the *piece de resistance*, the grand illusion, this happy arrangement will be governed by the people through the incorruptible process of voting.

Spooner saw this all as a joke. There is no connection between a vote cast in 2015 and an approval of the road to hell, paved with seemingly good intentions in the 18th Century.

## **Logic Fallacies in General**

Nothing clears the mind like a sober understanding of reality. But to understand reality one must have a framework. A critical part of that framework is logic, a metaphysical branch of philosophy. And it is an easier way to understand logic by understanding that which masquerades as logic, logic fallacies. Most people encounter logic far more

frequently in its violation than in its application. We are not drowning in information, rather we are drowning in misinformation — ideas deliberately or ignorantly set in logic fallacies.

Readers of this column know that I have featured discussions of logic fallacies. I have done this in hopes that, one relationship at a time, each of us will endeavor voluntarily to cleave to truth. This is the foundation of voluntaryism — human interactions should be voluntary. A human interaction that is based on a logic fallacy cannot be voluntary because one or both of the interactors do not have correct information.

In mid-February, I began to conduct a structured discussion group, with the topic “Whatever happened to the Age of Reason? Philosophy from Ockham to Mencken.” After a few snow cancellations we finally got around to our third meeting last Friday. I centered the discussion on the web site, *Thou shalt not commit logical fallacies*. And I emphasized a few frequently encountered fallacies, such as “Straw Man,” “*Ad Hominem*,” “The Fallacy Fallacy,” and “The Appeal to Authority.” We talked about how these arise through innocent ignorance, laziness, or ill intent. At least we can work against the innocent ignorance. Fallacies of all types bombard us everyday. Each individual, ultimately, has the responsibility to cut through these for self-preservation.

I am happy to report that our two hour session on logic fallacies was a great success, filled with “aha!” moments.

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What are the unifying themes of the above topics? I think they are renewal and lifelong learning. We never stop making connections. We may focus on making those connections as close to logic and reality as possible, so they will be good connections. But we can also realize that the connections never stop, that the ones that I see vs. the ones that you see are as different as fingerprints. No connections are frozen into a *state*, regardless of who wishes to control them in that way. We can learn from every connection — people, places, events, and other things.

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