

Movie: Jean Brodie, Spooner #13, Null Hypotheses



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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](#).

Everything I have to say today is about the masking of reality, in our schools, both public and private; in our ruling system, both formal and informal; and in our beliefs nurtured by a steady diet of misrepresentations, both intentional and incidental.

Voluntaryist Movie View #5 — The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie

If you ever want to see what's wrong with collective schooling just give this movie a look. Firstly, it shows that teachers have egos, they each have a mental model of themselves as teachers. Hidden away in a class room, usually observed only by impressionable, largely uninformed youngsters, they can for a time, get away with virtually anything. Would you want your daughter in Miss Jean Brodie's class?

The delusional Miss Brodie punks reality, in favor of unicorns and butterflies, with every nuance of her behavior before a collection of pubescent young ladies. The major turning point in the plot is when Miss Brodie's admonishments influence one of her students to run off to join her brother in the Spanish Civil War. The young woman is killed by marauders who attack her train before she ever gets to strike a blow for the loony cause that her teacher championed. The horrible irony is that Miss Brodie completely sublimates the tragedy, making it another unicorn or butterfly.

The second large turning point is when one of her charges beds down with the art teacher. This event is largely traceable to ideas that the teacher has planted in the student's head. This student is the one who awakens to reality, the death of her friend and the loss of her own innocence. She takes steps that will end Miss Brodie's career as a demagogue disguised as a teacher.

While the young lady commits aggression against her teacher, it is aggression of self-preservation. Miss Jean Brodie is a toxic bully, who has not the least concern for

unforeseen consequences.

Spooner Quote #13

The proceedings of those robbers and murderers, who call themselves “the government,” are directly the opposite of these of the single highwayman. ... In the first place, they do not, like him, make themselves individually known; or, consequently, take upon themselves personally the responsibility of their acts. On the contrary, they secretly (by secret ballot) designate some one of their number to commit the robbery in their behalf, while they keep themselves practically concealed.

I was once instrumental in portions of government that were masked by “blue ribbon commissions.” These are a manifestation of the maneuver of spreading the responsibility to dissolve the accountability. Who can you complain to about government and its religion, statism? The Congress of the US is a grandiose, highly formalized blue ribbon commission which was formalized by a blue ribbon commission of founding fathers. The direct object of a blue ribbon commission is to package reality in a way that hides its flaws. The direct object of a blue ribbon commission of robbers, self-appointed, is to hide robbery in a package looking like service.

In the next segment we will examine the null hypothesis, but here is one to think about along the way. A man will not deliberately fashion the club with which he is to be beaten. If you can find a single example contrary to that, then you can say with confidence that the opposite is true. In the meantime, since there has been in every such case an example that confirms all the elements, there has been no case which has been an exception to the rule. By the same rule, no man in government will deliberately fashion an instrument that will invalidate his function as a bureaucrat. There is honor among thieves. No group of robbers will destroy the sticks by which they will beat their victims.

Logic Fallacy #22 — Null Hypotheses

A null hypothesis is an excellent tool for the finding of reason and fact. It is in its deceitful application that it becomes a logic fallacy. It is a distinct form of special pleading.

A definition of “null hypothesis” at Wikipedia states:

In statistical inference on observational data, the null hypothesis

refers to a general statement or default position that there is no relationship between two measured phenomena. Rejecting or disproving the null hypothesis—and thus concluding that there are grounds for believing that there is a relationship between two phenomena (e.g. that a potential treatment has a measurable effect)—is a central task in the modern practice of science, and gives a precise sense in which a claim is capable of being proven false.

For example, to say “there is no link between excessive drunkenness while driving and auto accidents” is a null hypothesis. That is that the statement itself can be proven not to have general applicability by finding a single instance of a causal connection between drunk driving and a DWI accident. This disproof, however, only negates the absolute statement, it in no way validates the opposite as a rule. Now, the job of the able investigator is to pursue how great of a statistical truth is the antithesis to the null hypothesis.

Where the null hypothesis becomes a fallacy is when its disproof is offered as the totality of the evidence for the opposite. This can be done in several ways, for example —

Statement: A blue ribbon commission is always the most objective tool for determining fact.

This looks like a null hypothesis but key elements have no absolute value. The person making this pronouncement has no interest in disproving the pronouncement. The persons relying on this pronouncement have no means of disproving it, even if they were inclined to do so. The persons resisting this pronouncement must prove negatives to defeat the pronouncement; not objective, not always, not determinant, not factual. It is impossible to prove a negative.

It is the tendency of many humans to avoid the work of proof and disproof. When given the choice of going along to get along versus the laborious process of separating wheat from chaff, we will often accept the chaff even if the wheat is false.

There is, apparently, a reason why our mythical heroes wear masks. This relates to Bastiat's idea of what is seen and what is not seen. But Bastiat also tells us that the failure to see the unseen (an idea that appears to be a paradox), giving it as full credibility as the surface seen, is a willful neglect of reality. To operate on a false hypothesis is always error — there may be some short-term merit in assumptions based on false premises, but the natural long-term playing out of consequences will reveal the true consequences of a false premise, indelibly, for all human time.

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