

Individualism, Liberalism, and Verbal Accuracy

If you value liberty and morality, please do not misuse the word “individualism” by suggesting that it has anything to do with anti-social behavior, and do not misuse the word “liberalism” by suggesting that it has anything to do with libertinism or welfare statism. Individualism – that is, the primacy of the individual over any collective – is a necessary precondition of social cooperation, and (classical) liberalism – that is, unconditional respect for individual liberty and private property – is a necessary precondition of a dignified and virtuous life.

The destruction of civilization starts with the destruction of meaning, so if you value civilization, do not play into the hands of its enemies by adopting their language. Individualism and liberalism are good – to realize this, it suffices to notice that their opposites are not community and self-discipline (those are their extensions), but conformism and enslavement. Know your friends, so that you do not unwittingly join your enemies.