

More !@#\$%& Labels

Nobody asked but ...

I am both mystified and unimpressed with the current debate facing off libertarian brutalism with libertarian humanism. Either -ism is somewhat offensive to me. Firstly, they sound like something provided by external parties to provoke hostilities among libertarians.

Secondly, the presumption that libertarianism has only two flavors is further offending.

Just off the top of my head, if we were shopping for new subcategories of libertarianism, I would opt for logicalism, realism, or naturalism. And I have a bone to pick with libertarians who are settling for labels such as brutalism and humanism. Allowing labels to be pinned upon oneself for the sake of championing a brand of philosophy sets one up for abuse at the hands of others — particularly since these labels are fraught with subjective connotations. There can hardly be an objective definition of either brutalism or humanism.

I am reminded of how Ayn Rand let her publisher stick her with a title that included the word selfishness — for the rest of her life she mostly explained why that title wasn't as misleading as it sounded. If you want to call yourself a libertarian brutalist, be my guest, or a libertarian humanist, *vaya con dios*. But don't cry to me when you spend the rest of your career defending the tail of your principles rather than the head.

Kilgore