

Words Poorly Used #88 — Should

Today I heard an otherwise voluntaryist podcast, but it had far too many instances of the use of the word “should.” There were too many because “should,” in an independent clause is only another baseless assertion. The only way a “should” is permissible is in the first person when the speaker understands “why.” Whenever “should” is applied to the second or third person, the premises are flawed. There is no way to establish the authority of the first person relative to the other person. Since “should” can be unspoken, in the first person, there is no particular need for it in explicit expression. The exception is, however, that “should” can be used to state probabilities among things, for instance, “whoever partakes of dihydrogen oxide should eventually perish,” (coincidental) or “whoever bets on a horse race should either win or lose.” (causal) My head feels like exploding when I hear a voluntaryist say should in an authoritarian context.

— Kilgore Forelle