

Unintelligent Choice

Cultural commentators are correct concerning the West's cultural crisis. Western society is crumbling. Relativism, however, is not the culprit. The real causes lie elsewhere. One cause—the one I will focus on in Part II—is America's growing acceptance of a new set of alleged truths that we are being persuaded and sometimes forced to accept as absolutes. References to these absolutes are carefully avoided; nonetheless, the new “truths” and the behavior of those who accept (and oppose) them demonstrate that absolutism is alive and well.

I realize many critics will condemn this viewpoint as elitist and intolerant—the two worst sins of our “enlightened, progressive” age. I readily accept both charges, but, as you will see, not in the vein they are usually understood. I certainly believe that some truth claims are true and others false, and that some behaviors are moral and others immoral. I also believe that whatever is true is absolutely true and that whatever is moral is absolutely moral. I will demonstrate, in fact, that absolutism not only exists but must be true, and that even self-avowed relativists illustrate this reality.

On the other hand, I will also argue that much of what passes for universal truth today is nothing of the kind. The new absolutes and their foundational assumptions are false. Moreover, they are undermining the very building blocks of Western civilization, including basic principles of liberty, the institutions of marriage and the family, and our understanding of human nature, reason, ethics, and ultimately reality itself.

Just a few years after World War II, Richard Weaver, an English professor at the University of Chicago, wrote a profound treatise called *Ideas Have Consequences*. In it he stated, “There is ground for declaring that modern man has become a moral idiot.” He went on to show that the “dissolution of the West” he had witnessed was “the product not of biological or other necessity but of unintelligent choice.” We have no one or nothing other than ourselves and our choice to blame for it. In Weaver's words, “For four centuries every man has been not only his own priest but his own professor of ethics, and the consequences is an anarchy which threatens even that minimum consensus of value necessary to the political state.” From his standpoint in history, he could tell that modern society was self-destructing...

(The New Absolutes: How They Are Being Imposed On Us - How They Are Eroding Our Moral Landscape by William D. Watkins, Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 1996, 18-19; Text Modified)