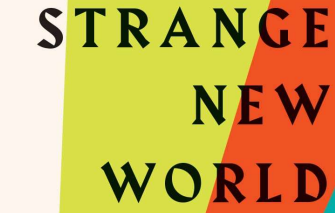


CHAPTER 8

Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness

Major Premise:

The rise of expressive individualism & the psychologized self is transforming the Western understanding of life & personhood, the meaning of happiness, and the concept of freedom. These changes have major implications for orthodox Christians and culturally conservative people.



STRANGE NEW WORLD

HOW THINKERS
AND ACTIVISTS
REDEFINED IDENTITY
AND SPARKED THE
SEXUAL REVOLUTION

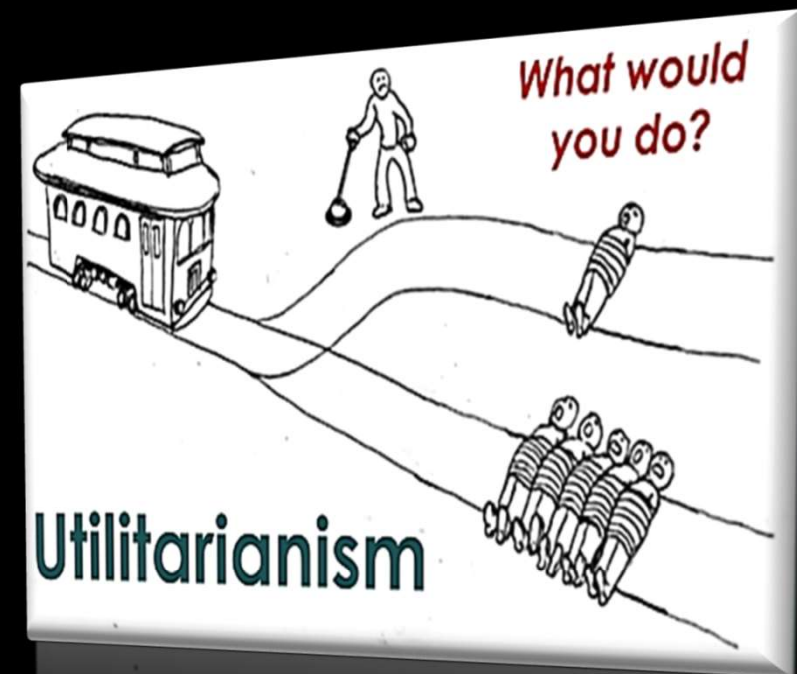
CARL R.
TRUEMAN

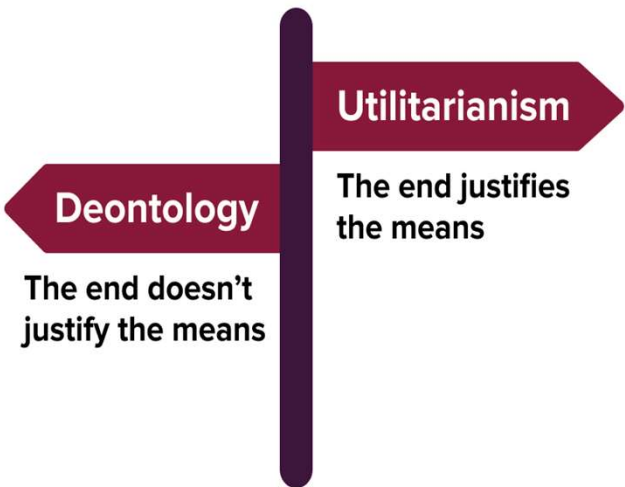
FOREWORD BY
RYAN T. ANDERSON

Modern Life

Expressive individualism has led to a view of personhood which “requires a degree of self-consciousness.” Unborn, and even new-born, infants & adults with advanced dementia do not have such self-consciousness and “therefore lack true personhood” (p. 150).

Whether to abort or euthanize them would involve a utilitarian calculation about the happiness of the caregivers.





Consequentialism
(Utilitarianism)

focuses on consequences of actions.

Deontology

focuses on duties.

Virtue Ethics

focus on character.

Modern Liberty

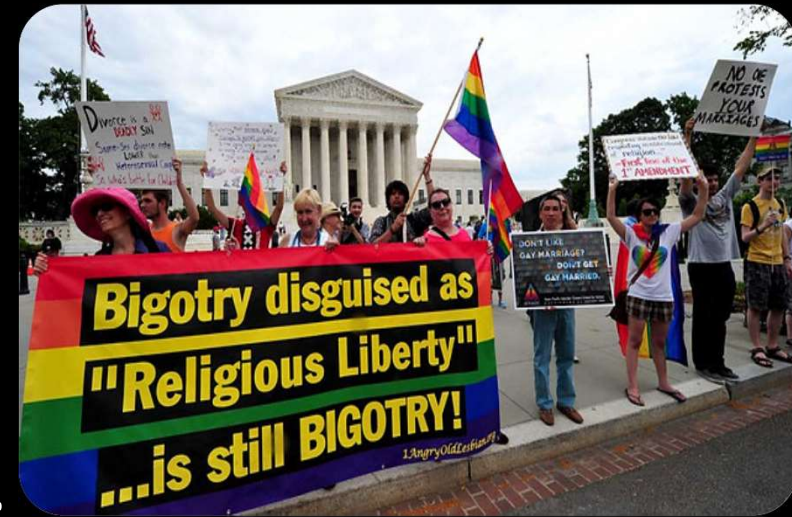
In many Western democracies traditional freedoms of religion and speech, once thought foundational & inviolable, are now attacked as problematic and harmful. Such “attacks on traditional freedoms” (p. 152) are rooted in the rise of expressive individualism & the psychologized self that Dr. Trueman has traced.



Life, Liberty and the
Pursuit of Happiness

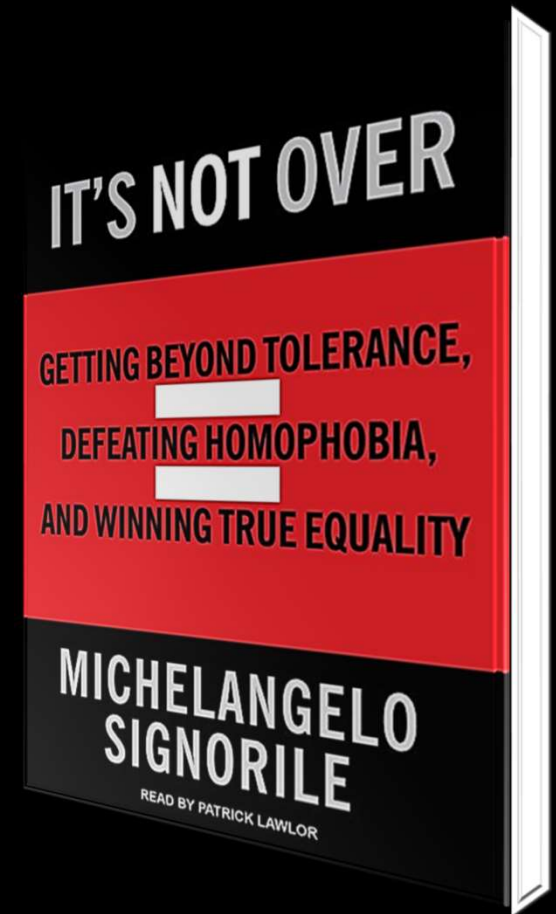
The Problem with Religion

The sexual revolution has brought with it a “growing antipathy ... toward freedom of religion.” Religious objections to LGBTQ+ concerns are considered nothing but bigotry (p. 153). Some recent Supreme Court decisions (pp. 153-156) have reinforced the ideas of religious objections as bigoted and of expressive individualism in general.



Not Tolerance, but Equality

What those who identify as LGBTQ+ demand is not tolerance but “equality [which] requires recognition that tolerance simply does not provide” (p. 157). In a world in which the psychologized view of self dominates & people identify *as* their sexual preferences and acts, expressing negative views of, for example, homosexual behavior will be taken as a “form of oppression” (p. 158).



The Problem with Free Speech

Working from the thought of German neo-Marxist Herbert Marcuse, “new style progressives ... [argue] that freedom of speech is really a means of allowing bigotry and hatred to be expressed with impunity and treated as legitimate viewpoints” (p. 163). A further development along these lines is the attempt in higher ed. curriculum to replace or even abolish the traditional cultural canon of Western civilization.



Discussion Questions

1. Have you personally experienced any of the rising hostility to free speech and freedom of religion that Trueman points to? How much of a problem do you think this is?
2. How might we be tempted to think in utilitarian ways? What aspects of our culture encourage utilitarian thinking?
3. Is the “canon” of Western civilization worth preserving? What might we lose culturally by allowing expressive individualism to deconstruct or demolish the canon?
4. How will our society change if cancel culture, oppressive victimhood, and repressive freedom continue to have influence?