



# The Abolition of Man

with Dr. Steve Turley

## Lesson 6: Lewis's Predictions Fulfilled in Three Ways

### Outline:

#### Focus Questions:

- How many of Lewis' prophecies have come to pass?
- Does Lewis' work stand up to the test of time?

#### A Look at Three of Lewis' Predictions (2:35)

- **Lewis predicted an eventual death of virtue. (2:50)**
  - This has come to pass! A prime example is our modern college campus.
  - Our conception of what it means to be an educated person has changed dramatically. For example, Christians founded 114 of the first 118 colleges in the US to propagate the Gospel.
  - Historically, the primary means by which students learned Christian virtues was a Liberal Arts education (inspired by the Greeks and developed by Christians).
  - Dr. Turley draws from **Julie A. Reuben's *The Making of the Modern University: Intellectual Transformation and the Marginalization of Morality* (3:50)**, to highlight how a Liberal Arts education shifted into modern research programs. As this occurred, universities abandoned moral education and replaced it with science and technology based programs. Today's universities are concerned with vocational training, or providing skills necessary for students to enter a secular, globalized society, rather than fostering the virtues needed to live a humane life.
  - A secular education entails the loss of moral education, instead making way for questions of the self, such as genres of race, gender, and sexuality. ***Self-actualization***, the realization or fulfillment of one's talents and potentials, becomes a new virtue.
    - Another example Dr. Turley provides is **Ralph Schoenstein's article "The Modern Mount Rushmore,"** in which Schoenstein recounts a time when 8 out of 20 kids in a 3rd grade class answered "me," when prompted to share who their heroes were.
  - As Lewis feared, turning away from the doctrine of objective values does mean a loss of virtue-formation for students.
- **Lewis saw the loss of the Tao in the rise of a technocracy. (11:00)**
  - Lewis argued that secular, technology based societies inevitably reject traditional moral conceptions of life. Because technology is value-free and mechanisms neutral, the only way a society can reach a moral-consensus is through manipulation. The secular elite (the Conditioners) manipulate the masses (the Conditioned).
  - Globalization (13:55) also vindicates Lewis' predictions. Globalization involves interactions between capitalism, urbanization, technology, and telecommunication within a mass-transnational economic system. For example,



- what happens in the Tokay stock market affects European markets, which then affects Wall Street before reaching back to Tokyo.
- Globalization involves disembedding, a system which propels economic activity away from localized control and into transnational markets. Several examples of this process are shopping malls, which are local in proximity to consumers but sell clothing from national or international retailers, and movies that feature national or international acting talents. Similarly, disembedding dislodges local customs, traditions, languages and religions. Traditional ways of living become harder to sustain in a globalized life.
    - Dr. Turley shares the example of the Parker family eating their Christmas dinner at a Chinese restaurant in *A Christmas Story* (1983).
  - In global societies, a human person becomes a consumer. So many options become available that sticking to tradition appears restrictive.
  - As Lewis feared, a consumer conception of life replaces a moral conception of life. Traditional morals and customs give way to lifestyle values. Lifestyle values operate according to a plurality defined by sociologist Peter Berger as life worlds, where each individual practices the belief system they deem most plausible.
  - Similarly, lifestyle values replace traditional values in politics and law. While traditional societies viewed human law as reflective of transcendent, divine law, modern societies invent laws according to the needs of social conditions determined by the Conditioners. The Conditioned are under the law, while the Conditioners are above the law.
  - **Finally, and most frighteningly, Lewis predicted the trajectory of eugenics and human behavioral modification. (21:00)**
    - There are many examples today that substantiate Lewis' fears concerning eugenics, gene modification, and the affect of such practices on successive generations, including the holocaust of abortion in the Western world.
    - Modern societies still draw an ethical line between enhancement and treatment when it comes to gene modification, but that line is extremely tenuous.

### Hope for the Future (25:36)

- Dr. Turley ends this lecture series by reminding us that there is hope in the face of Lewis' predictions. Let's not forget Samwise Gamgee's famous lines from *Lord of the Rings*.





- **Growth of classical education in the United States:**
  - In the last 3 decades, the United States has seen a renaissance of classical Christian education, classical schools, homeschools, and confessional colleges.
  - The ACCU reports that there are now over 230 classical schools in the United States, while in 1994 there were only 10. Similarly, in 2002 there were 17,000 students enrolled in classical schools, while there are 41,000 today.
  - Classical education offers an opportunity to reverse mindsets such as Gaius and Titius' in The Green Book.
  - If we want to restore classical virtues in our time, educators must reform the institutions that teach the next generations. Lewis' work reminds us that we can restore the frames of reference that teach objective values such as truth, beauty, and goodness.