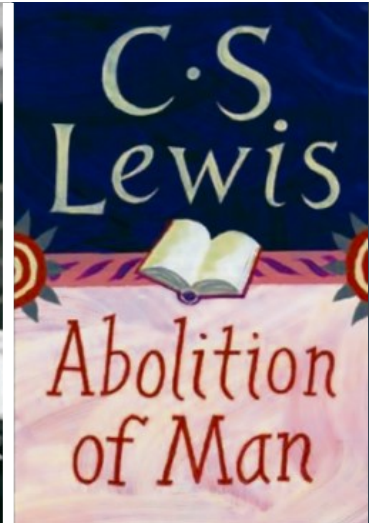


A new era of tyranny

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AS C.S. Lewis predicated, the rulers who are now seeking to refashion society, and the character of the people within it, do so through the erosion of our values.

Most will know Lewis as a children's author, but he was also a vigorous critic of modern society and the dangerous trends that were emerging within it.

In *The Abolition of Man*, one of the most prophetic books of the 20th century, he writes about the presence of a powerful elite that would seek to radically transform society for their own ends.

While recognising that there have always been those who seek to exercise power over others, Lewis notes that we are rapidly approaching a new age in which scientific and technological advances will enable a small minority of 'man-moulders' to dominate society.

However, technology alone will not be sufficient. To refashion society according to their objectives, they will need to undermine resistance to those objectives.

This will not be achieved by force, because trying to impose a radical new image of society on people would likely bolster their resistance against it.

Instead, the key strategy is to erode the traditional, established values of civil society, and thereby undermine the individual's sense of what is right and wrong.

People will then be less likely to unify around those values and provide robust resistance to the new direction that the rulers wish to take society and its members.

Talk of values can seem abstract. Our concern is understandably drawn to the practical implications and dangers that technological innovations bring - such as the control over our lives that digital ID and central bank digital currencies will place in the hands of a few.

However, the implementation of such technology must always overcome the resistance of the many who will be subject to it.

What determines this resistance are the values that we hold and are willing to defend; values such as the right to individual liberty, freedom of movement and personal privacy. We may not always clearly articulate the importance of such values, but instead, have an intuitive sense of what is right and wrong.

Nevertheless, behind this sense there will invariably be a set of values that are guiding our choices and actions.

Rather than mere abstractions, therefore, our values have a practical import. They help us to determine what is significant and desirable, what is worth defending and fighting for, and what should be the character of the society in which we wish to live. Values such as freedom, justice and truth are the guiding lights by which we, and society as whole, can stay on course.

Without a strong commitment to such values, we are vulnerable. We can find ourselves being led in any direction by the elites, and, as Lewis pointed out, moulded or conditioned to serve their objectives. As the saying goes, if you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything.

Note the extent to which so many people

surrendered their individual freedom and bodily sovereignty to the authoritarian demands of the state during the so-called covid pandemic.

Such a response points to the dangerous consequences that can occur when people no longer maintain a keen sense of the values that underlie an open and free society.

The erosion of these values by the elites has been underway for many years. In *The Abolition of Man*, published in 1943, Lewis already saw this process in the modern education system.

He discusses in detail the growing tendency to instil in children the notion that the traditional values of society, and any value-judgement at all, are simply an expression of the individual's feelings.

As a result, any sense of what is right or wrong is deemed to be merely relative and has no more importance than someone else's notion of what is right or wrong. Each individual has their own values, and while a particular value may feel important to you, you cannot expect others to share or respect that value.

Against this, Lewis stands defiant. Our values are not simply an expression of our individual feelings. Obligations to do good, to refrain from harm, to protect children, and to care for elders have existed across cultures. Lewis invites us to recognise that such values have been, and continue to be, a central feature of any civilised society.

These values are common to our shared humanity. Any individual, society or culture that violates such values should rightly be considered inhumane.

While working to erode these values, Lewis recognised that the rulers would still appeal to them to justify their own objectives. Presenting themselves as 'servants and guardians of humanity', they will say they have a duty to do it good. But the transparency of this claim is becoming apparent to all who care to look.

Measures supposedly taken to protect health have caused incalculable harm to individuals and communities. Environmental policies that we are told will save the Earth lead to the impoverishment of people.

Educational programmes that speak of children's welfare introduce them to ideas and material that, in any civil society, would be considered abhorrent.

The Abolition of Man demands that we remain alert to these tendencies. To continue to uncover how the elites introduce policies that, while appealing to traditional values, cloak an agenda that serves them.

Against such deception, it asks us to become awake to how the sincere maintenance of the values that underlie an open and humane society are essential to its survival.

To this end, Lewis's great work implores us to recognise the ways in which these values are being eroded, and the dire consequences for a society that provides no resistance to this. Doing so will leave us better placed to preserve these values within ourselves, and to stand up with others and defend them whenever they are being compromised.

It is not just civil society that is at stake, but the abolition of our humanity itself.