

C. S. Lewis and *The Abolition of Man*  
Dr. David Diener

I. Biographical Introduction

II. Men Without Chests

III. The Way

IV. The Abolition of Man

1. “Until quite modern times all teachers and even all men believed the universe to be such that certain emotional reactions on our part could be either congruous or incongruous to it – believed, in fact, that objects did not merely receive, but could *merit*, our approval or disapproval, our reverence or our contempt.”<sup>1</sup>
2. “There is one element you could isolate in any account you give, and this is the correct formation of our feelings of pleasure and pain, which makes us hate what we ought to hate from first to last, and love what we ought to love. Call this ‘education,’ and I, at any rate, think you would be giving it its proper name.”<sup>2</sup>
3. “Virtue of character is about pleasures and pains. For pleasure causes us to do base actions, and pain causes us to abstain from fine ones. That is why we need to have had the appropriate upbringing – right from early youth, as Plato says – to make us find enjoyment or pain in the right things; for this is the correct education.”<sup>3</sup>
4. “If I had to isolate a single priority for [educating] children, it would be to convey to them a deep and abiding confidence that there is a givenness to the universe and to human nature, a confidence that is the foundation of ordered desire to spend one’s life learning to fit into that givenness. The classical model of education – as opposed to modern models – is a great boon [precisely] because it assumes a prescriptive understanding of human nature and the cosmos. It assumes that human beings, individually and socially, have an objective purpose that calls us to certain ways of life. . . . The structure of teaching in [classical] schools is rooted in the assumption that the universe has meaning and purpose, that human nature has meaning and purpose, and that reason itself is a capacity that is fulfilled as human beings come to know and honor the objective value present in Creation. The most urgent educative priority of parents is to enable their children to acquire a confidence in the givenness of things.”<sup>4</sup>
5. “In a sort of ghastly simplicity we remove the organ and demand the function. We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful.”<sup>5</sup>
6. “The thing which I have called for convenience the *Tao*, and which others may call Natural Law or Traditional Morality of the First Principles of Practical Reason or the First Platitudes, is not one among a series of possible systems of value. It is the sole source of all value judgments. If it is rejected, all value is rejected. If any value is retained, it is retained. The effort to refute it and raise a new system of value in its place is self-contradictory. There has never been, and never will be, a radically new judgment of value in the history of the world. What purport to be new systems or (as they now call them) ‘ideologies,’ all consist of fragments from the *Tao* itself, arbitrarily wrenched from their context in the whole and then swollen to madness in their isolation, yet still owing to the *Tao* and to it alone such validity as they possess.”<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, 14-15 (emphasis in the original).

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *Laws* 653b6-c4.

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1104b9-13.

<sup>4</sup> Ken Myers, “Education and the Recovery of the Non-modern Mind,” *The Journal of the Society for Classical Learning* 7 (Spring 2014): 5-6.

<sup>5</sup> Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, 26.

<sup>6</sup> Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, 43-44.



REPAIRING  
*the* RUINS



TOGETHER  
*again!*

## Job Posting

School name:

Contact's name and info:

We are seeking:

FRISCO, TEXAS • JUNE 15-18, 2021



REPAIRING  
*the* RUINS



TOGETHER  
*again!*

## Job Posting

School name:

Contact's name and info:

We are seeking:

FRISCO, TEXAS • JUNE 15-18, 2021