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SCIENCE FICTION AND THE ABOLITION OF MAN

Finding C. S. Lewis in Sci-Fi Film and Television

foreword by Brian Godawa

Technocratic Death Denial as Disavowal of Life

Lessons from *Brave New World*
and *The Abolition of Man*

by Mike Alvarez

In the titular chapter of *The Abolition of Man*, C. S. Lewis argues that “we reduce things to mere Nature *in order that we may ‘conquer’ them.*”¹ But in our conquest of Nature via technocratic “perfection” of man, we are conquered by Nature instead, thereby increasing her domain. Man reduces himself to raw material, to mere objects to be manipulated, not, “as he fondly imagined, by himself, but by mere appetite, that is, mere Nature.”² In this essay, I argue that the denial of death undergirds the reduction of man to raw material, to component parts (such as genes, organs, and cells, or cogs in a social machinery) within which death can be localized, then abolished via technocratic means. By “technocratic,” I refer not only to the ubiquitous application of science and technology in our everyday lives, but, like David Moller, to a particular mindset in which “technological developments are favorably and *unquestioningly* received,”³ a mindset that privileges rationality and efficiency, with little consideration to “the moral and cultural consequences of technological dependence.”⁴ Of course, technocratic death denial has many guises, from disrespect of the dead and dying to the fear

1. Lewis, *Abolition of Man*, 71.

2. *Ibid.*, 73.

3. Moller, *Life's End*, 53; italics added.

4. *Ibid.*, 54.

of death itself, as illustrated in Leslie Libman's and Larry Williams's film adaptation of Aldous Huxley's novel *Brave New World*.⁵

This essay is divided into two parts. In the first part, I discuss the many strategies (often contradictory) of death denial at work in the film, with an emphasis on the diegetic world. These strategies include but are not limited to: state control over human subjects' biological destiny; the effacement of death from civic spaces and public view; the making of death into a spectacle; and the suppression of affect pertaining to loss. In the second part of the essay, I argue that the film and Lewis's text are as relevant today as when they were originally conceived, if not more so. We live in a society where death has become privatized, severed from the communal fold and hidden behind institutional walls. We inhabit a "mediascape"⁶ that is ripe with the imagery of death but does little to foster empathy for the dying. And we accept, grudgingly or unquestioningly, the temporal limits placed by medical establishments on mourning and grief.

Ultimately, I argue that by denying death in such elaborately technocratic ways, we are also disavowing life. Lewis writes: "We do not look at trees either as Dryads or as beautiful objects while we cut them into beams."⁷ In a similar vein, we do not look at humans as soulful or sinful while we cut their bodies open, to tinker with a tissue here and an organ there. Like the "basilisk which kills what it sees and only sees by killing,"⁸ we render the human inhuman by seeing him as a collection of mere parts or raw materials. But in order to truly celebrate what it means to be human, we must use science and technology in a manner respectful to nature—that is, to the precariousness of life and the inevitability of death.

Death Denial in *Brave New World*

Within the film's diegesis, death is disavowed firstly through the World State's attempt at technological mastery over the life process itself. Infants are not born but decanted, cultivated from "gland extracts" and grown in

5. Libman and Williams, *Brave New World*. Libman's and Williams's adaptation originally aired on NBC as a television movie on 19 April 1998. It has since been released commercially on VHS and DVD. Though I make occasional references to the original source material, the analysis is principally concerned with the film. However, the themes I identify are very much present in Huxley's novel, arguably to an even greater extent.

6. Defined by Appadurai as the flow and distribution of mediatised images, and the technologies that generate them. See Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 35.

7. Lewis, *Abolition*, 70.

8. *Ibid.*, 80.

places called hatcheries. "They are turning out human beings like machines," says John Cooper (played by Tim Guinee), one of the film's protagonists. In fact, the institution of the family—whether nuclear, extended, foster, or adoptive—has been completely abolished, so that the words "mother" and "father" are not only anachronistic, but blasphemous and profane. The idea of pregnancy is horrific and unthinkable, for it introduces randomness and chance into the collective gene pool. For this reason, monogamy is deemed "antisocial." Opposition to monogamy is constructed discursively via such slogans as "everyone belongs to everyone else" and "promiscuity is a citizen's duty." To exhibit exclusive preference, or worse, to develop feelings for another human being, is antisocial because it would suggest envy and possessiveness, which are antithetical to the rational, scientifically-oriented government maintained by World Controllers like Mustapha Mond (Leonard Nimoy). According to Mond, envy and possessiveness lead to violence and war, which in turn will decimate the world and its population, for it was war that ravaged the old world in the first place. In short, to give people mastery over their own biological destiny is to give them the reins to their own destruction.

Neonates are not only decanted, but as children are conditioned via subliminal messages to embrace their appointed place in society, which is based on a caste system consisting of Alphas, Betas, Gammas, and Deltas.⁹ Alphas are comparable to the managerial class, while Betas and Gammas are an administrative class; this is summed up quite nicely by the slogan, "Alphas have to think things through, Betas and Gammas have too much to do." Deltas, meanwhile, are the labor class, depicted in the film as workers toiling over assembly lines. To feel differently, to envision a different station in life for oneself, is to threaten the organic unity of society: "When the individual feels, the community reels." Such a view conceives of society as a singular biological entity, and the human beings that constitute it as mere parts or organs that are assigned value according to their usefulness, value that is determined from the very beginning of a person's biological existence. If the World State is a living organism, then its Controllers must work very hard to stave off its death, and this is accomplished via technocratic strategies of domination.

The world I have described so far bears an uncanny resemblance to the dystopian future imagined by Lewis in chapter 3 of *The Abolition of Man*: "The final stage is come when Man by eugenics, by pre-natal conditioning, and by propaganda based on a perfect applied psychology, has

9. Epsilons are strangely missing from the film.

obtained full control over himself."¹⁰ By "control over himself," Lewis really means "the power of some men to make other men what *they* please."¹¹ But instead of "a few hundreds of men [ruling] over billions upon billions of men,"¹² power in *Brave New World* is concentrated in the hands of ten World Controllers who govern all of the World State's known territories. The World Controllers are analogous to Lewis's Conditioners, in that they set the definition of 'Humanity'¹³ and go on to "produce conscience"¹⁴ in man. Aside from eugenics, conditioning, and propaganda, there is another way that conscience is technocratically produced, and that is through pharmacologic manipulation of affect. In Huxley's novel, and in the film adaptation by Libman and Williams, euphoric feelings are produced in the masses via the consumption of *soma*, a blue substance that can be ingested as tablets, or administered intravenously in liquid form. That it is called *soma* is rather telling; "soma" is Greek for "body," and the people who consume *soma* to manage their moods via their bodies, are themselves bodies managed by the state. *Soma* does not seem to produce euphoria directly, however. Instead, it works by misdirection, by instilling a false sense of happiness via the suppression of unwanted affect, namely, those feelings associated with conflict and loss, such as anger, hatred, sadness, and love. Again, notice the slogans: "Sadness is an illusion. Only happiness is real"; "Just one gram and you won't give a damn."

To better understand the technocratic denial of death in *Brave New World*, one need also look at the World State's topography. One of the hallmarks of utopian and dystopian scenarios is what I call the *enclosure*, a seemingly impenetrable barrier that separates the known from the terrifying unknown, the finite from the vast maw of infinity, the logical and ordered from the illogical and chaotic, the permissible from the unacceptable, the human from the bestial, the subject from the faceless other. In short, the enclosure serves to demarcate the limits of ideology, creating an oppositional relationship between what rests comfortably within and what lies beyond.¹⁵ We can also think of the enclosure as separating that which falls

10. Lewis, *Abolition*, 59.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*, 58.

13. *Ibid.*, 63.

14. *Ibid.*, 61.

15. Examples of the enclosure abound in science fiction literature and film, from the Green Wall of Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*, to the outer shell in George Lucas's *THX 1138*, to the compounds and modules of Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*. The enclosure can divide horizontally or vertically, creating such splits as wilderness/metropolis, terrestrial/subterranean (E. M. Forster's "The Machine Stops"), aerial/earthbound (Fritz

under the umbrella of Nature from that which does not. According to Lewis, Nature is a floating signifier with “varying meanings,”¹⁶ and, I would add, cultural and historical specificity. When we speak of Nature, we are really using a shorthand to refer to all those things we *wish* to conquer (or think we have conquered); whether or not we are actually able to do so is another matter. The enclosure, then, separates Nature from whatever it happens to be dialectically positioned against. If Nature is used to mean death, then life is just on the other side. But this is a false dichotomy because the seeds of life and death reside within one another, and neither life nor death can be conquered.

The enclosure employs the mechanisms of displacement and projection: what is disavowed from civil society is projected onto the wildlands beyond. The reservations of *Brave New World* thus serve as containers for what the World State has expunged from collective consciousness—particularly, the visage of death. The manner of Bernard Crowe’s (Peter Gallagher) and Lenina Crowe’s (Rya Kihlstedt) arrival at the reservations during their excursion away from utopia supports this idea. Upon entry they are threatened with death; instead of landing safely, they crash land due to engine failure and turbulence, thus upholding the reservations’ association with danger. While waiting for rescue, they are then harassed and assaulted by knife-wielding thugs who knock the helicopter pilot unconscious, and to put it mildly, reveal Bernard’s incompetence with hand-to-hand combat. They are saved by John Cooper, or “John the Savage,” who along with his mother Linda (Sally Kirkland) are brought back to utopia as curiosities. Unlike Lenina and Bernard, who until now have been untouched by the prospect of dying, John and the other people of the reservations must contend with death daily. A chasm thus emerges: the World State, with its access to technology and monopoly on cultural sophistication, has utterly effaced death, while the reservations have all but naturalized it. However, neither makes for a sustainable way of life, because man cannot be mere “intellect” or mere “appetite.”¹⁷ Interestingly, the reservations offer viewers a glimpse of the dead past Mustapha Mond speaks of, a past torn by war and violence and from which the scientifically-enlightened present seeks to break away,

Lang’s *Metropolis*), and planetary/stellar (Neil Blomkamp’s *Elysium*). The enclosure is typically man-made but can also be the product of nature and wildlife, as in the Uncharted Forest of Ayn Rand’s *Anthem*. In *Brave New World*, the enclosure is natural. To overcome the waters and canyons separating utopia from the notorious badlands called “reservations,” one must fly in a helicopter.

16. Lewis, *Abolition*, 71.

17. *Ibid.*, 25.

as the slogan "History is Bunk" suggests. The reservations, then, are facsimiles of the past frozen in the present; they are death kept at bay.

But death can't be held at bay indefinitely, because one cannot erect a fence between life and death. Moreover, the enclosure is illusory: what has been displaced is never truly gone.¹⁸ The people of utopia are not blessed with everlasting life; despite the scientific imperative to eliminate randomness and chance, the skin eventually sags, the bones become brittle, and the organs unfailingly fail. What the World State does to what it cannot keep out is hide it from view, or else turn it into a spectacle. Intimations of the deteriorating body, of the body approaching mortality, elicit discomfort if not outright fear or disgust. Unsurprisingly, there is a glaring absence of the old and the infirm in the World State's civic spaces, which appear to be populated exclusively by virile bodies, with young actors having the monopoly on screen time. Thus, from the perspective of utopia's youthful denizens, John's mother Linda is the epitome of the abject: old, wrinkled, grey-haired, and skeletal, a liminal being on the threshold of life and death. The film establishes her decrepitude and proximity to mortality by way of contrast. At the cocktail party "honoring" John's and Linda's entry into utopia, Linda is the lone old woman amidst a sea of finely dressed bachelors and bachelorettes. They sip wine, engage in verbal foreplay, and dance with their hands on each others' hips, while she stuffs her mouth full with hors d'oeuvres and champagne. The juxtaposition is deliberate, emphasizing her savagery, base appetite, and unsightliness.

The World State's effacement of death becomes visible once again when Linda is admitted to the hospital. Due to overconsumption of soma, she has become dangerously frail. According to her attending physician: "I've never seen someone in such poor physical condition." This statement suggests not only the gravity of Linda's infirmity, but the rarity of infirmity itself within the World State's walls. The discomfort registered by Lenina's face at the sight of Linda in a hospital bed underscores how strange and unfamiliar the concepts of illness and mortality are to the people of utopia. Lenina could not wait to excuse herself from the room, because to be so close to sickness and death is to be reminded of one's own corporeality. Curiously, Linda's IV drip contains nothing but liquid soma. Death denial thus operates at two levels here: by sequestering the infirm, death is hidden from public view; and by *drugging* the infirm, the infirm is rendered incapable of reflection

18. For example, Lenina exhibits preference for Bernard *because* she is in love with Bernard. In a conversation with Fanny (Wendy Benson), it is revealed that Lenina has been seeing him, and *only* him, for the past six months. Similarly, Bernard's desire to innovate existing technologies of happiness suggests a gnawing unhappiness, that he envisions a better life than the one he is currently living.

upon his or her own dying. How ironic that the cause for her rapid decline in health (soma) is administered as a panacea.

But the disavowal of death is perhaps most palpable in the scene where John mourns Linda's passing.¹⁹ The scene takes place in the Center for Death. A handful of cadavers are displayed on tables, Linda's among them. The setting is dauntingly sterile: The floor is bleach white, as are the walls and ceiling. Nurses in white uniforms usher children, who are also wearing white, to and from cadavers, which are draped in white sheets. At first glance, the mood conveyed is somber, almost reverential, but this is immediately upended by the frivolity and callousness with which Linda's body is treated. "She's ugly," one child holding a bright blue balloon quips, to which another child responds, "Look at her teeth!" An enraged John scares the children away, and he is reprimanded by a nurse: "You'll make the children think that death is something bad. We're trying to teach them."

Of course, one is inclined to agree that death is not necessarily "something bad." The eminent philosopher Martin Heidegger, for example, says that death is humankind's "ownmost" or "utmost" possibility.²⁰ Unlike other possibilities which may or may not come to pass, death is the horizon towards which we are inevitably drawing closer, towards which we are constantly *becoming*. However, this horizon places a necessary limit on our becoming; otherwise, the world would be an infinity of meaningless possibilities. To live authentically, then, one must embrace this horizon, for it is the prospect of death that colors each action with meaning. Lewis would agree that death *can* be meaningful, and that dying "for the Good Way" is preferable to "slavery and base deeds" and to "life with shame."²¹ But this is not what the nurse in *Brave New World* is "trying to teach" the children. According to the nurse, "Her [Linda's] life is over, but it's okay because everyone else is alive and happy. . . . We can recycle the organ and reclaim the phosphorous." Linda is thus reduced to both spectacle and raw material, and the children, as Lewis feared, are taught that *all* human beings are reducible as such. They are also taught that one should smile more and frown less, that death is not worth grieving or mourning: "One dead person can't possibly matter that much." But if one cannot commemorate death,

19. In Huxley's novel, Linda dies of infirmity. In Libman's and Williams's film adaptation, Linda is instead killed by Tomakin (Miguel Ferrer), the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning, to hide the fact that he is John's father and the man who had left Linda stranded in the reservations. Tomakin shoots up Linda with more soma than her body can handle, making her death look like an accident.

20. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 284.

21. Lewis, *Abolition*, 99.

then one cannot celebrate life. And if one dead person matters very little, then the same must hold true for all that is living.

The white that saturates the Center for Death does not signify reverence, but effacement, for the emotions that should be felt in the face of loss are choked. As Lewis argues, objects (and, I would add, events) merit emotional responses that are appropriate to them.²² Just as a cataract merits the word "sublime,"²³ the sight of a man hunched over his dead mother ought to merit sympathy, if not empathy. But John Cooper, or "John the Savage," is alone in his grief, and this is symbolized by the fact that he is the only one wearing black. One can say that John is the only character to possess a "chest," that liaison "between cerebral man and visceral man."²⁴ Unsurprisingly, the Soma Distribution Center, where people go to pick up their rations of soma, is a mere escalator ride away from the Center for Death. The spatial and architectural design is not without significance. That they are housed under the same roof and bureaucratic management shows the extent of the World State's "bio-power," defined by Foucault as state dominion over the bodies and biological destiny of its subjects, controlling life while harnessing the power of the population.²⁵ Furthermore, that the Center of Death is situated directly *below* the Soma Distribution Center serves as a spatial metaphor for the imperative to push death's visage under the rim of consciousness, by whatever technocratic means necessary.

Technocratic Death Denial Today

As *Brave New World* illustrates, technocratic death denial undergirds the reduction of man to a mere assemblage of raw materials, and to component parts in a larger social machinery or organism. The World State exercises power over the biological destiny of its subjects, from the moment of conception to the moment of cessation, because to grant subjects human agency is to hand over the reins to their own destruction. People are conditioned to embrace their appointed place in society; else they fan the flames of war and threaten the survival of the species. Topographically, a fence is erected between life and death: peace, plenitude, and good health are tucked safely within the World State's walls, while violence, scarcity, and infirmity are projected outwards onto no-man's land. The fence also severs the past from the present; however, the fence is illusory because what lies beyond

22. *Ibid.*, 16.

23. *Ibid.*, 2.

24. *Ibid.*, 25.

25. See Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 137–40.

has been and will always be within. Death inside the walls is thus hidden from view, its carriers—the old and the infirm²⁶—sequestered. But because the visage of death cannot be totally expunged from consciousness, people are also anesthetized to the affective dimensions of loss. They are rendered incapable of mourning the death of others and reflecting upon their own mortality. When all else fails, death is turned into a spectacle: Linda's carcass is displayed for the amusement of children, while John's accidental fall from the edge of a cliff is applauded by onlookers.²⁷

The "world of post-humanity"²⁸ envisioned in *Brave New World* and imagined by Lewis is not without relevance to our society; we in the Western hemisphere can be said to live in a state of death denial. Examples of our death-denying practices, both overt and subtle, are innumerable. Three domains of contemporary death denial that particularly resonate with *Brave New World* and *The Abolition of Man* can be seen in end-of-life care, visual culture, and behavioral medicine.

Like the World State's aged and infirm, in the world of post-modernity, people with life-limiting or life-threatening illness are sequestered from view, hidden behind institutional walls when they would rather be at home with family or someplace else that is familiar. Consider the following passage by Walter Benjamin:

Dying was once a public process in the life of the individual and a most exemplary one; think of the medieval pictures in which the deathbed has turned into a throne toward which the people press through the wide-open doors of the death house. In the course of modern times dying has been pushed further and further out of the perceptual world of the living. There used to be no house, hardly a room, in which someone had not once died. . . . Today people live in rooms that have never been touched by death, dry dwellers of eternity, and when their end approaches they are stored away in sanatoria or hospitals by their heirs.²⁹

In other words, dying has become privatized, a domain of experience separable from living, with its own rules of governance. We have lost our ritual capacity to make sense of death, relying instead on technocratic measures to prolong life, and believing "that death itself may someday be treatable as

26. One may also add to this list the disabled, the deformed, the unpredictable, the unclean, the savage, and the asymmetric. The list is not exhaustive.

27. In Huxley's novel, John commits suicide instead after participating in a mass orgy.

28. Lewis, *Abolition*, 75.

29. Benjamin, "The Storyteller," 93–94.

a disease."³⁰ Our "techno-frenzied response"³¹ to death has given birth to "shameful forms of dying,"³² marked by intense loneliness, isolation, searing pain, and the effacement of one's humanity, with patients simmering in their own excreta. The deferral of death is not intrinsically ignoble, but it can be when the *subjectivity* of the dying person is jettisoned. And that's what often happens when the human being is reduced to the materiality of the corporeal body, to a mere assemblage of parts that function here and malfunction there.

As mentioned earlier, visual culture also brims with death denial. This idea may seem preposterous given how visual media suffers no shortage of death imagery. After all, spectacular death is a hallmark of the action blockbuster film, and the dismembered corpse a staple of contemporary horror films. But even (or especially) here, death has been made into "the other," a spectacle, marked by excess, from which we ourselves are immune, rendered so foreign an experience as to have little bearing on our comparably mundane lives. The dramatic genres, even when they "confront" death, bracket the subjectivity of dying characters. As John Horne noted, in such films the spectator is allied not with the dying or deceased individual, but "with the family and friends of the 'dearly departed.'"³³ *Brave New World* is no exception; although we the viewers are made to feel pity for Linda, our sense of solidarity and sympathies are with John.

Recounting an exhibition titled, "Saying the Unsayable: Opening a Dialogue about Living, Dying and Death," Horne finds it troubling that of the more than eight thousand photographs submitted, only a mere handful foster viewer identification with the dying. The rest sidestep the affective dimensions of death by rendering it too figurative or abstract, on the one hand, or looking at the dead through a cold, steely, and objectifying frame, on the other. In both cases, the photographs, while not necessarily complicit with the status quo of sequestering the dead, are *complacent*; instead of unsettling spectators, they preserve the viewers' sense of ontological security. But unsettled we must be if we are to challenge the discourses that normalize stigmatization of the dying and reduction of the dead body to apparatus.

But technocratic death denial is perhaps most astonishing in behavioral medicine's pathologizing of bereavement, which contemporary American society has unwittingly embraced. According to the fourth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, a person must exhibit

30. Moller, *Life's End*, 53.

31. Kellehear, *Social History of Dying*, 235.

32. *Ibid.*, 215.

33. Horne, "Visualising the Dying," 231.

at least five of the nine symptoms listed under major depressive disorder in order to qualify for the diagnosis. A bereavement exclusion clause had been put in place so that a person mourning the death of a loved one was exempted from this diagnosis—provided that mourning lasted no longer than two months.³⁴ Any longer and the person was deemed disordered, an unproductive and impaired member of society who must be rehabilitated immediately, typically via pharmacologic means. That a timeline for bereavement (a narrow one, at that) had been prescribed underlies a reluctance to “sit with death,” to feel the long-term effects of loss. There is an imperative of efficiency, of moving on quickly so that one may resume life, as if life and death are two mutually exclusive terrains of human existence.

In *The Loss of Sadness*, Allan Horwitz and Jerome Wakefield lament the outlandish prescribing practices, and inflated prevalence estimates, that result from the medical imperative to frame depression as an epidemic, a public health crisis comparable to obesity and diabetes. They feared that ordinary *human* sadness would truly cease to exist should the number of symptoms required for a diagnosis of depression be lowered further. Their fears were realized when the bereavement exclusion clause was removed from the fifth edition of the *DSM*, so that *anyone* in mourning automatically qualifies for the diagnosis. Moreover, “persistent complex bereavement disorder” is now listed as a separate condition requiring further study, so that adults in mourning twelve months after the death of a loved one are further pathologized.³⁵ It’s as if the idea that people are depressed because depressing things happen in life is no longer acceptable. This foray into the *DSM* is relevant to our discussion thus far, for what is soma if not a fictional counterpart to the Prozac and Zoloft of today, an instrument employed by Conditioners in their misguided conquest of Nature? We might laugh at or feel pity for the hordes of Deltas scrambling for their rations of soma, but our situation is not terribly different because we too nurse our moods with such substances. This is not to say that technocratic manipulation of mood via pharmaceuticals is ineffectual; after all, every mood state has a distinct neurophysiological signature, and many people can attest to being helped by drugs. Rather, the point is that in treating our emotions as raw material to be manipulated at will we risk manipulating away our own humanity. Our unquestioning subscription to mechanistic views of emotion underlies stubborn resistance to the human feelings aroused by death and loss.

34. American Psychiatric Association, *DSM IV TR*, 740–41.

35. American Psychiatric Association, *DSM-V*, 789–90. The time frame for children is even shorter (six months).

It would be an exaggeration to say that the dystopian future envisioned in *Brave New World* and *The Abolition of Man* has come to fruition—but we are getting dangerously close. In our frenzied attempt to locate death within the human body, and to subvert it via technocratic means, we have inadvertently forsaken life. We tend to the raw materials that make up the body but not to the soul that holds them together and gives them meaning. To borrow the words of Lewis, we spend much time “cut[ting] down jungles”³⁶ when we should be “irrigat[ing] deserts,”³⁷ much time conquering our natural, emotional response to death and suffering when we should be cultivating our affective and interpersonal capacities as humans. It is imperative that we cultivate respect for death, the dead, and the dying if we are to reclaim the life we have forsaken, the territories of human emotion that have sunk into the depths of repression. Citing the ancient Chinese *Analects*, Lewis himself writes: “When proper respect towards the dead is shown at the end and continued after they are far away, the moral force (*tê*) of a people has reached its highest point.”³⁸ In other words, respect for death is among the highest of virtues. To respect death is to be attuned to the lives that preceded us, the lives that surround us, and the lives that have yet to be. This does not mean science and technology should be abandoned; that would be foolhardy. Instead, the technocratic mindset must be remediated so that man is not all head and no heart, and so that science is used in the service of humankind. To reinvigorate the soul in the corporeal body, one must acknowledge the horizon that is death.

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36. Lewis, *Abolition*, 13.

37. *Ibid.*, 14.

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The Abolition of Man, C. S. Lewis's masterpiece in ethics and the philosophy of science, warns of the danger of combining modern moral skepticism with the technological pursuit of human desires. The end result, Lewis says, is the final destruction of human nature. From *Brave New World* to *Star Trek*, from steampunk to starships, science fiction film and television have considered from nearly every conceivable angle the same nexus of morality, technology, and humanity of which C. S. Lewis wrote. As a result, science fiction film and television have unintentionally given us stunning depictions of Lewis's terrifying vision of the future, as well as the hopeful vision of the future that is possible if we take heed to wisdom. In *Science Fiction and the Abolition of Man*, scholars of religion, philosophy, literature, and film explore the connections between sci-fi film and television and the three parts of Lewis's book: how sci-fi portrays "Men without Chests" incapable of responding properly to moral good, how it teaches the *Tao* or "The Way," and how it both portrays and joins Lewis in warning against "The Abolition of Man."

"Though *The Abolition of Man* is one of Lewis's shortest books, it is also one of the most important and influential. This interesting collection of essays shows how the perceptive critiques and prescient warnings found in *Abolition* resound tellingly in many science fiction films and TV shows. A valuable and thought-provoking volume."

—MICHAEL WARD, Fellow of Blackfriars Hall, University of Oxford

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