

Title – The Twisted Tao of Truth: Corruption and the Hope of Emotion

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Abstract: This paper explores the connection between Philip K. Dick’s science fiction short story, “We Can Remember It for You Wholesale” and C.S. Lewis’s essay “The Abolition of Man.” Lewis’s essay explores how those in powerful governmental organizations use their control to take advantage of those around them just like Interplan uses their power to threaten Douglas Quail, Dick’s main character, to achieve their own ends in Dick’s short story.

Interplan’s goals are informed by their own personal Tao, and Lewis describes Tao as “the doctrine of objective value” (9). However, because Interplan desires to serve itself instead of the people around it, the organization outwardly portrays a Tao of kindness and goodness but is actually violent and ruthless as seen by their employment of assassins to accomplish their own purposes. Lewis argues that when the objectivity of Tao is stripped away from the people, pleasure will guide the whims of those who are in control. Similarly, Rekal, Incorporated, the memory implantation company in Dick’s story, exists solely to provide pleasure to people without any concern for the deceit of implanting false memories as real ones. These memories reflect Lewis’s warning that those who are in positions of power can alter man’s mindset and create a new type of consciousness that suits governmental purposes. Lewis declares that the government fashions man even though man believes he can change himself, and Dick

demonstrates this type of manipulation through Quail's confusion regarding his identity as he wrestles with his false memories implanted by the government and his real ones. Lewis argues that in spite of governmental interferences, facts cannot be quenched and mankind's emotions guide him to these truths just as Quail's emotions ultimately reveal his untouchable status to the government and save his life in the end.

Christian Worldview Integration: While Lewis cautions those around him of the dangers of corrupt governmental establishments who seek to distort truth and control man for their own desires, Dick creates a similar science fiction world where corrupt governmental systems seek to exploit the nation's desire for pleasure over truth to control its citizens. Lewis recognizes the danger that exists when men exchange truth for power, which ultimately does not lead to power at all, but imprisonment under those who hold more power than they. Dick's story allows readers to see the results of tampering with truth and how easily authority can twist that truth for their own means. Both literary works highlight the necessity of objective truth in a culture much like our own that has ceased to prize such a thing and instead preoccupies its inhabitants with pleasure. In writing these works, these men open readers' eyes to the dangers that occur when men in positions of power abuse it, and they warn readers of how these powerful figures can use pleasure to numb the mind, thus leading to an erosion of objective truth. However, hope continues to exist in the desires and emotions of man as they may eventually lead to truth. Emotion may be a confusing view of hope, but in another work, Lewis mentions that if a man's soul longs for greater fulfillment than the world can offer, this longing points to the ultimate Truth, Jesus Christ. Therefore, in all circumstances, truth cannot be pushed aside nor can it ever be fully extinguished because God created man with a longing that only He can fulfill.