

GROUNDWORK: THAT HIDEOUS STRENGTH, PART 1

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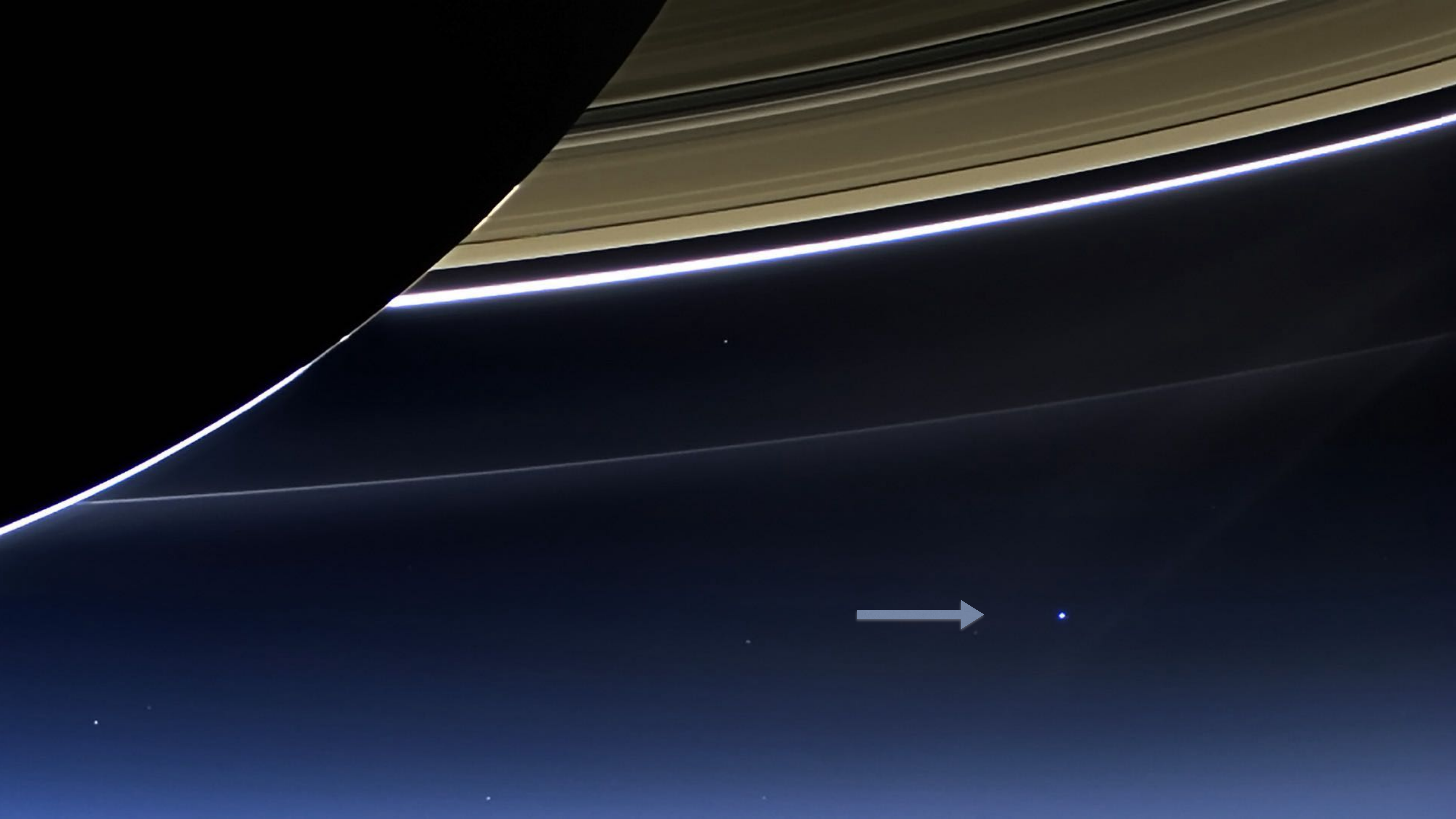
VENUE: LIFE TOGETHER AT EVANGEL TEMPLE

DATE: SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2024

Lewis, C. S. The Space Trilogy, Omnib: Three Science Fiction Classics in One Volume: Out of the Silent Planet, Perelandra, That Hideous Strength. HarperCollins. Kindle Edition. All quotations in the book will be numbered only.

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:"

-Paul, Colossians 1:16, KJV



The Purpose of the sessions on *That Hideous Strength* will be a literature study that intersects with a study of some discussions between Ransom and Weston, then the NICE and its secrets in the basement.

Some of these arguments are central to those that formed my theological self.

I want to explore what it is about people that makes them do what they do.

As Christians I believe we need to explore the landscapes of fiction to understand something about ourselves, and we in the Church are in dire need of a better anthropology.

There is a diffidence, an elevated character in the Christian people in these books. I want to describe that and understand why it is so desirable. How can a Christian achieve that?

There is no guarantee I will achieve my purpose in the weeks ahead.

PART 1: GROUNDWORK

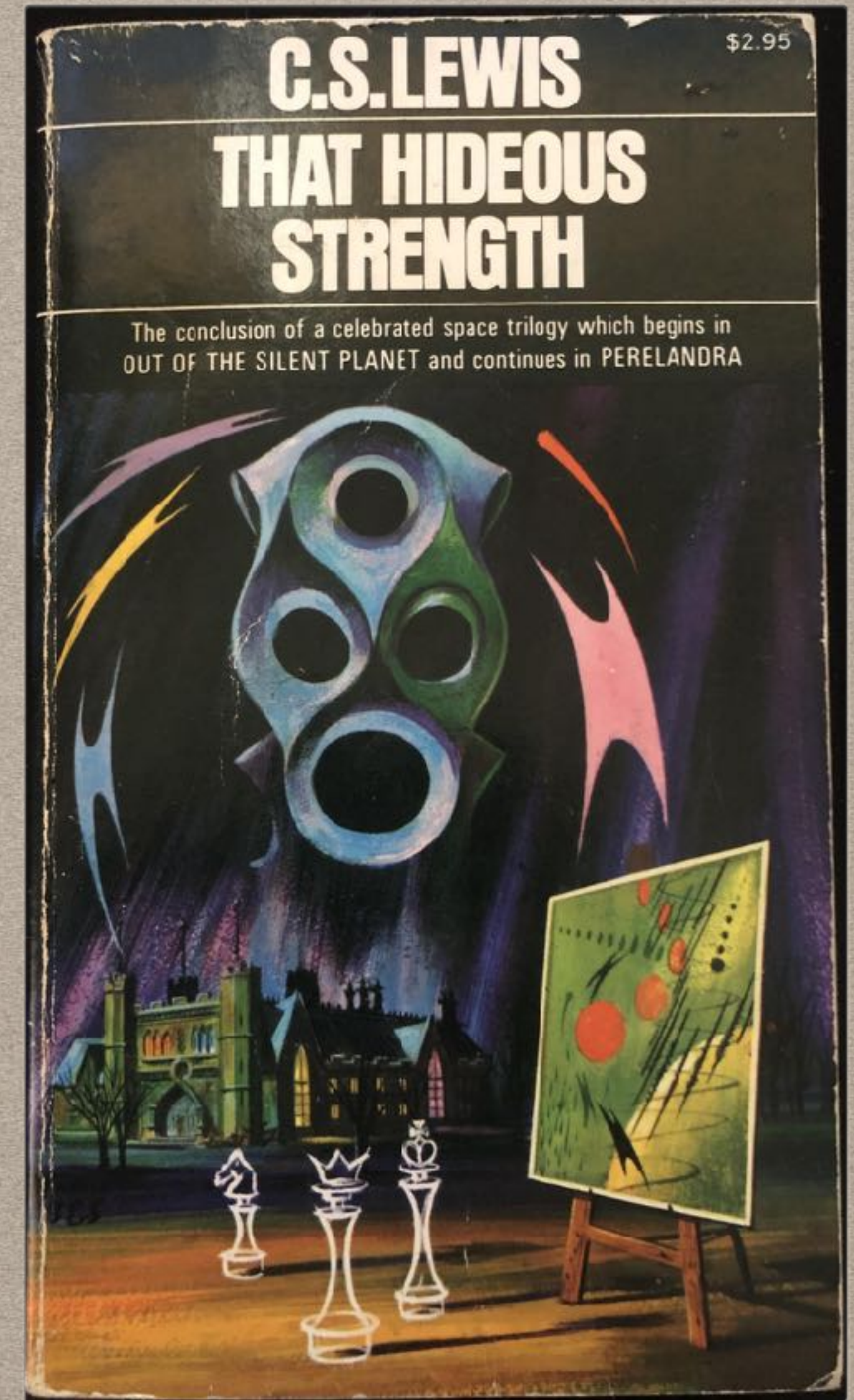
THE LITERATURE & THEORY

BELBURY AND ST. ANNE'S-ON-THE-HILL

CHARACTER STUDIES

CIRCLES WITHIN CIRCLES

HIERARCHIES



PUBLISHING HISTORY OF LEWIS' SPACE TRILOGY

- Lewis, C.S. *Out of the Silent Planet*. London : The Bodley Head, 1938.
- Lewis, C.S. *The Dark Tower and Other Stories*. New York : HarperCollins Publishers Inc. 1977, published by Lewis' literary executor Walter Hooper. This book is the abandoned successor to *Out of the Silent Planet*. Its authenticity has been challenged by some Lewis experts.
- Lewis, C.S. *Perelandra: A Novel*. London : The Bodley Head, 1943.
- Lewis, C.S. *That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-ups*. London : The Bodley Head, 1945.

PUBLISHING HISTORY OF LEWIS' SPACE TRILOGY

- Lewis, C.S. *The Abolition of Man*. The book was first delivered as a series of three evening lectures at [King's College, Newcastle](#), part of the [University of Durham](#), as the Riddell Memorial Lectures on 24–26 February 1943.

FROM PHYSICS TO TRANSCENDENTALS: GOD CREATED THEM ALL

- These presentations come from a Realist point of view, but not the sort from a realist/antirealist debate which is functionally a linguistic problem, rather a more primitive sensibility, that God, the universe, and persons of a wide variety exist independently of our observation of them.
- This is also not an Idealism like Plato's where there is a world of ideas separate from and prior to the real world, or George Berkeley's where our observations create the world, and that it is not knowable unless there is an observer.

FROM PHYSICS TO TRANSCENDENTALS: GOD CREATED THEM ALL

- This includes:
 - the complexity of human personhood with all the emergent properties we are familiar with, including all the scientific, philosophical, mental, biological, theological, social, and linguistic properties.
 - all the problems with our acquisition of knowledge in an embedded world, our systems of belief, and our associations with others and God.

COSMOLOGY

- Oyarsa: Rulers in the Field of Arbol (the Sun) parallel to Angels of the Christian story.
- Earth's Oyarsa rebelled (Christian story slightly modified).
- We will look at this more closely in the third and fourth week.
- Some of this Cosmology looks a good bit like gnostic hierarchies of the past, with its variety of gods and demigods which for Lewis is only a framework.
- All beings ultimately serve Maleldil.





BELBURY AND ST. ANNE'S

TWO FIGURES OF THE BATTLE

BELBURY

- Belbury is characterized as a scientific institute, the N.I.C.E. "the National Institute of Co-ordinated Experiments. (473)" But it is in reality, a front for the activity of the bent Oyarsa of Thulcandra, a hive of villainy with the ostensible purpose of making room for a new kind of people freed from morality and servitude who are instead enslaved to demonic forces.

BELBURY

- What seems to be important for the formation of this Institute is the particular training involved in becoming part of the inner circle. Training involves the denunciation of the self in objective terms to hollow out the individual making place for the demonic entities to inhabit, like Weston's body on Perelandra.
- The essential parts of being human are systematically subverted to the purposes of the bent one on Thulcandra through destruction of objective value for expedience.

BELBURY

- Here is where the training of “The Green Book” of Lewis’ *The Abolition of Man* comes in where objective value is replaced with a linguistic scam that involves the dehumanization of humanity.

ST. ANNE'S-ON-THE-HILL: LOGRES

- St. Anne's is the home of Dr. Elwin Ransom, A.K.A. the Pendragon or leader of Logres, an ancient English association whose purpose is driven by the need to hold back the forces of the bent Oyarsa of Thulcandra.
- Logres is composed of a variety of scholars, spiritually adept individuals, and ordinary people, who cooperate to bring the story to a conclusion.
- Its historical predecessor is none other than King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. Merlin makes an appearance on the side of Logres and becomes the vessel of the gods to destroy the NICE.

ST. ANNE'S-ON-THE-HILL: LOGRES

- "And Mrs. Fisher-King more or less handed over the problem to her brother, to our chief. That in fact was why she gave him the money. He was to collect a company round him to watch for this danger, and to strike when it came." 591
- This is a story like much apocalyptic literature where the forces of good and evil face off.

ST. ANNE'S-ON-THE-HILL

- Without contradiction, for Lewis, the character of Logres is deeply embedded in both English and Christian history, where the Merlin figure embodies both the highest version of natural man (the magician) and the submitted servant of God (in Logres).
- The mysteries of the human conflict involved in birthing the peopled World and the Savior of the world are deeply interwoven in Logres, and the Fisher King and Merlin are the instantiations of this figure.



CHARACTER STUDIES

CENTRAL FIGURES

CHARACTER STUDIES: MARK AND JANE STUDDOCK

- Two of the main characters, Mark and Jane Studdock are pursued by the NICE but also find their home with St. Anne's. Their internal conflicts and indecision are the turning points of the book.
- Mark Studdock is recruited by the NICE to write fake news for the takeover of Britain under the ostensible "scientific" view of people. He spends most of his time in a whirl of uncertainty about his position, and eventual silent resistance to the NICE who has put him in a compromised position to force his acquiescence.

CHARACTER STUDIES: JANE STUDDOCK

- Jane Studdock finds herself the subject of a variety of disturbing dreams, which Logres and the NICE finds to be a premonition of the near future.
- Because of her desperation and lost feeling associated with Mark's alliance with the NICE, she finds herself in contact with members of Logres who are both her mentors and comforters. She aligns with Logres, but is pursued by the NICE, almost falling permanently into their hands.

CHARACTER STUDIES: MARK STUDDOCK

- Mark Studdock, driven by his deep insecurity into associations with people who mean to use him. He seeks the path to the center of the inner circle, but finds it fraught with a variety of uncertainties, and is unsure how to behave.
- "Mark was silent. The giddy sensation of being suddenly whirled up from one plane of secrecy to another, coupled with the growing effect of Curry's excellent port, prevented him from speaking." 496

"The real thing is that this time we're going to get science applied to social problems and backed by the whole force of the state, just as war has been backed by the whole force of the state in the past."

-Mark Studdock 494

CHARACTER STUDIES: WESTON AND DEVINE

- Weston dies at Ransom's hand on Perelandra while being possessed by dark eldila from Thulcandra.
- Devine reinvents himself in THS as Lord Feverstone, the lackey who is used by the NICE to insinuate them into the purchase of Bragdon Wood behind Bracton College in the University of Edgestow, thought to be the burial place of Merlin, whom the NICE thought to recruit into their project.

CHARACTER STUDIES: FEVERSTONE

- Lord Feverstone reveals to Studdock what the NICE will do, not what the NICE says to the public what it will do.
- "Some men have got to take charge of the rest—which is another reason for cashing in on it as soon as one can. You and I want to be the people who do the taking charge, not the ones who are taken charge of. Quite." 499
- "Sterilization of the unfit, liquidation of backward races (we don't want any dead weights), selective breeding. Then real education, including prenatal education." 499

CHARACTER STUDIES: FEVERSTONE

- "A real education makes the patient what it wants infallibly: whatever he or his parents try to do about it." 499
- If Science is really given a free hand it can now take over the human race and recondition it: make man a really efficient animal. 497
- Feverstone as proxy for Gaius and Titius in the *Abolition of Man*, where people are reformatted in the empty philosophy of the NICE, where Instinct is the driving force of civilization. Contradictions ensue.

CHARACTER STUDIES: WITHER AND FROST

- Wither is the human head of the NICE who has abandoned his own person to possession by the macrobes (demonic influences). His diffident personality is contrasted with a particular violence that emerges when he is displeased.
- Frost is another fully incorporated disciple of the macrobes, who has presence in the spiritual realm. He spies on Jane Studdock's dreams before she finds herself at St. Anne's submitting to the Pendragon, and is the one responsible for human interactions with the macrobes through the criminal head attached to the apparatus in the basement.

CHARACTER STUDIES: RANSOM

- Ransom has inherited the estate of Logres with the stipulation that he take the title and name of Fisher King, and is now the Pendragon of Logres. Still visibly pained by the wound in his foot from Weston's attacks, he longs for the Perelandrian paradise he will go to at the end of the book.

CHARACTER STUDIES: MERLIN

- Merlin is the same Merlin of the tales of King Arthur, sleeping all the intervening centuries under Bragdon Wood.
- His metaphysical gifts arise out of an affinity to nature, which in his era is tantamount to Magic, in ours, of problematic provenance, yet somehow still operational.

CHARACTER STUDIES: MERLIN

- His figure is placed as the fulcrum and vessel of the gods' activity, primarily for his capacity to exercise the natural magic.
- Eventually, his absorption of the mighty angelic powers leads to his atomic dissolution, a sleeper now awake to express his final enchantment as a willing servant under Maleldil of the rulers of the field of Arbol.

CHARACTER STUDIES: THE DIMBLES

- Our first encounter with them is with Jane Studdock, where, in a flurry of worry, Jane goes to their house and finds comfort with “Mother” Margaret Dimble.
- Dr. Cecil Dimble is one of Jane’s tutors at Bracton College. But also serves in Logres, as an expert on ancient Arthurian Britain and its languages.

CHARACTER STUDIES: FRANK AND CAMILLA DENNISTON

- "Camilla had just stepped out of a car and next moment she introduced a tall dark man as her husband. Jane saw at once that both the **Dennistons were the sort of people she liked.**" 589
- The Dennistons were both part of Logres, and submitted to the Fisher King.

CHARACTER STUDIES: GRACE IRONWOOD

- Miss Ironwood seems to be the manager of St. Anne's, privy to the inner workings of Logres and capable.
- Jane Studdock has been sent to her by Dr. Dimble. Grace helps Jane unpack the dream/vision of the Alcasan's head and the whole story.

CHARACTER STUDIES: ANDREW MACPHEE (MCPHEE)

- MacPhee plays the skeptic for Logres to help sort fact from fiction. He is not a Christian, but has a respect for truth.
- This character plays an aspect of truth that is not well respected in Christian circles. And even though the Fisher-King requires his input to help sort out the truth of matters, his materialism is rejected out of hand.



CIRCLES WITHIN CIRCLES

THE SOCIAL TRAP IS DESIGNED AS ANTI HUMAN, ANTI GOD.

CIRCLES WITHIN CIRCLES

- I wanted to consult Gary Liddle for a talk he gave at an awards ceremony at the end of the year at Evangel U, ~2013-2014. I was unable to arrange a meeting due to health factors.
- This feature of the story, the social acceptance of an individual in terms of their acquiescence of unspoken orders of loyalty forces Mark Studdock into a whirlwind of insecurity about his status within the NICE.
- Is he ever in the inner circle or not? Is the inner circle worth the cost?

CIRCLES WITHIN CIRCLES

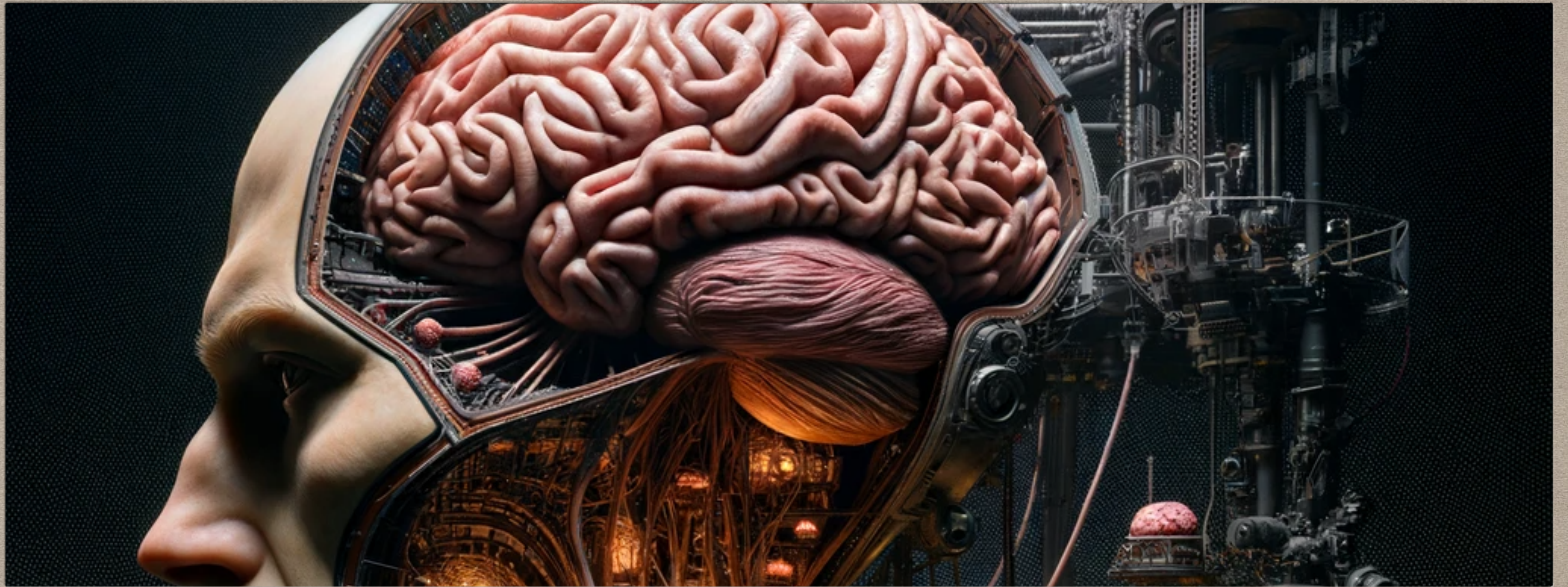
- The NICE, with its demonic basis, is not interested in the humans it has lured into its trap. Rather, cuts them and their values to pieces and reassembles them in an awkward form, such as that of Wither, or Frost, whose persons have been subverted into slavery in the name of freedom.

CIRCLES WITHIN CIRCLES

- This is a point where *The Abolition of Man* also emerges in the pages of THS. The revaluation of values found in AoM, strikes at the heart of objective values and truth.
- Humans are turned into instruments which are used then discarded.

CIRCLES WITHIN CIRCLES

- Promoting more basic “virtues” that arise out of instinct, internal value, human virtue and physical law are ousted from their regulatory function and replaced with a hollow mechanical shell.



HIERARCHIES

EXPLICIT AND METAPHORICAL HIERARCHIES OF POWERS
AND AUTHORITIES COLOSSIANS 1:16

HIERARCHIES

- Contrast the respectful hierarchies of the systemwide administration of Maleldil through angels and spirits in most of the field of Arbol, and the hierarchy of rebellion in Thulcandra (Earth).

THE CONFLICT: THAT HIDEOUS STRENGTH, PART 2

AUTHOR: C. S. LEWIS

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VENUE: LIFE TOGETHER AT EVANGEL TEMPLE

DATE: SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 2024

PART 2: THE CONFLICT

THE SARACEN'S HEAD AND THE PENDRAGON

CHAPTER 13: "THEY HAVE PULLED DOWN DEEP HEAVEN ON THEIR HEADS"

DALL•E 3: A majestic scene featuring the Fisher-King from C. S. Lewis's 'That Hideous Strength'. The Fisher-King, portrayed as a wise, serene, young, and ageless figure, is seated in a sunlit room. The large windows of the room frame a lush pastoral landscape with vibrant green fields, rolling hills, and a clear blue sky. Inside, the room is adorned with medieval-style decor, including tapestries and ornate furniture. The Fisher-King is dressed in colorful golden medieval attire, symbolizing nobility and calm authority. The entire scene radiates a magical and serene atmosphere, blending the indoors and outdoors in a harmonious way.



The Pendragon

PART 2: THE CONFLICT

THE SARACEN'S HEAD AND THE PENDRAGON

CHAPTER 13: "THEY HAVE PULLED DOWN DEEP HEAVEN ON THEIR HEADS"

DALL•E 3: A surreal, macabre artwork in a dimly lit, futuristic laboratory setting. Featuring a mechanical pedestal with a realistic, life-size mannequin head designed to evoke a sense of human deterioration. The head faces the viewer, with the top part artistically represented to resemble an opened section, revealing intricate, fleshy, brain-like structures made of synthetic materials. These structures expand outwards, artistically mimicking organic brain matter. The head is connected to the laboratory environment by a network of various tubes, wires, and metal support structures, creating a hauntingly eerie scene. The scene is carefully crafted to include elements that suggest human anatomy while ensuring that all components are unmistakably artificial, emphasizing the horrific, yet fictional nature of the artwork.



Saracen's Head

THE BATTLE: THAT HIDEOUS STRENGTH, PART 3

AUTHOR: C. S. LEWIS

PRESENTER: DOUG OLENA

VENUE: LIFE TOGETHER AT EVANGEL TEMPLE

DATE: SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 2024

PART 3: THE BATTLE

CHAPTER 15: "THE DESCENT OF THE GODS"

DALL•E 3: In a majestic scene from C. S. Lewis's 'That Hideous Strength', the Fisher-King and Merlin are featured. The Fisher-King, a serene, wise figure with the appearance of a thirty-year-old, sits in the evening dusk. He is dressed in colorful golden medieval attire, symbolizing nobility. Beside him, Merlin, displaying a dour expression mixed with surprise, has an aged look with long hair and beard, suggesting a man of hundreds of years. He is dressed in the festive robes of Logres. The room, illuminated by the frosty red light transitioning to a star-lit scene through uncurtained windows, is adorned with medieval-style decor including tapestries and ornate furniture. This setting creates a magical, serene atmosphere, blending the indoor ambience with the mystical outdoors.



The Descent of the Gods

PART 3: THE BATTLE

CHAPTER 16: "BANQUET AT BELBURY"

DALL•E 3: A tumultuous scene in an opulent ballroom, where a lavish banquet is being disrupted by a multitude of wild animals. The ballroom is richly decorated with sparkling chandeliers, luxurious curtains, and long tables laden with an array of fine foods. Amidst the chaos, various wild animals including elephants, bears, tigers, monkeys, dogs, and birds are causing havoc. They are seen harassing guests, trampling over the tables and food, and causing destruction throughout the room. Guests are either fleeing in terror or trying to avoid the animals. The scene captures the extreme chaos and panic as the serene elegance of the banquet is turned upside down by the wild animal intrusion.



Banquet at Belbury

RESOLUTION: THAT HIDEOUS STRENGTH, PART 4

AUTHOR: C. S. LEWIS

PRESENTER: DOUG OLENA

VENUE: LIFE TOGETHER AT EVANGEL TEMPLE

DATE: SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2024

PART 4: RESOLUTION

CHAPTER 17: "VENUS AT ST. ANNE'S"

DALL•E 3: An imaginative scene depicting Venus visiting St Anne's in C.S. Lewis' 'That Hideous Strength'. The setting is a quaint, old English house with ivy-covered walls and a large garden. Venus, portrayed as an ethereal, radiant woman with flowing hair and a luminous gown, stands in the garden. The garden is lush with a variety of flowers, and ancient trees. The house, in the background, exudes a cozy, welcoming atmosphere with warm light shining from its windows. The scene conveys a sense of magical realism, blending the ordinary with the extraordinary.



Venus at St. Anne's