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DuPlessis-Hay, Michèle.

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ABSTRACT

***That Hideous Strength* by C.S. Lewis: The Preparation of an Annotated Critical Edition**

Michèle duPlessis-Hay

This dissertation seeks to address the problems arising from the complicated textual history of C.S. Lewis's novel *That Hideous Strength*, and the sophisticated, often misunderstood, nature of the web of allusion, sources and influences on which the novel depends. One of the duties of an editor is to mediate between the text and its readers. C.S. Lewis's *That Hideous Strength* has many different kinds of readers, but the editor can facilitate their understanding of the text, and can provide an accurate text. Critical responses to *That Hideous Strength* and the Ransom trilogy have included commentary and explanation, mere description, and evaluative criticism. Some critics have displayed fundamental misunderstandings of what Lewis has written: this suggests the need for an annotated edition.

Fewer than three pages of an early manuscript survive. The novel has three first editions: British (1945), American (1946), and abridged (1946)—the abridgement was done by Lewis, who revised what he did not excise. In general, the British edition offers a better text, but the revisions in the abridged edition must be taken into account too. Later editions of the novel have been based on the 1965 paperback edition of the American edition. A number of errors in the American edition, and more introduced by the paperback edition, have been perpetuated and readers nearly 70 years after the novel's first publication are offered only editions based on faulty editions and with misleadingly documented antecedents.

Lewis was extremely widely read and borrowed enthusiastically in a number of ways from many sources and authors. Some of his Classical, Medieval and Renaissance influences have received critical attention, but the field is very wide: a case-study of the influence of Alanus ab Insulis across all Lewis's work shows that he turns to Alanus again and again in explorations of hierarchy, God and Nature, and what it is to be human. Lewis's most important literary Christian mentors were G.K. Chesterton and George MacDonald, both of whom he read from long before his conversion. Case-studies of these two authors show that Chesterton influences Lewis's thought and style as well as providing numerous sources of ideas and images, while elements of MacDonald's mythopoeia frequently appear in Lewis's fiction. A case-study of Lewis's friend Charles Williams shows that general assumptions about the nature of his influence on *That Hideous Strength* focus on the wrong things.

The cosmology that forms the background to the Ransom trilogy is syncretic, as Lewis combines elements of the Medieval cosmology he describes in *The Discarded Image* (1964) with later traditions, contemporary knowledge, and contemporary works of speculative fiction. This syncretism enables Lewis to explore human being, human relations with God, and ethical and theological truths from an imaginative standpoint while celebrating such elements of the traditional world-view as the plenitude of creation and the planetary powers. This syncretism has attracted critical responses ranging widely from warm enthusiasm to strong disapprobation.

A set of Preliminary Notes acts as a bridge between the Introduction and the Annotations, covering a wide range of topics: questions of objective value ("Men Without Chests"); Lewis's introduction of himself

and autobiographical elements into the trilogy ("Lewis as Character"); Lewis's exploration in the novel, as well as in ethical and critical works, of the moral dangers inherent in the desire to belong ("The Inner Ring"); the sources of, and the use Lewis makes of, the Arthurian material in *That Hideous Strength* ("Logres"); the way in which Lewis presents and uses blasphemy, profanity, and swearing in the trilogy ("Blasphemy and Swearing"); Lewis's rejection (following Chesterton), in the novel and in other writings, of the notion that remedial treatment can be more humane than retributive punishment ("Humane Remedial Treatment"); Lewis's fictional presentation of questions about time and possible perceptions and understandings of it ("Philosophies of Time"); Lewis's invented language and the way in which his presentation of it evolves over the trilogy ("The Language of Creation").

Although paper or electronic variorum editions have many benefits, they are in general difficult for a reader, and a collated, "eclectic", annotated edition that can serve as a critical or a reading text of *That Hideous Strength* is offered here. The edition shows what changes Lewis made for the abridged edition, and includes a full *apparatus criticus* and textual notes justifying decisions taken about substantive differences and instances where the editor has not followed the copy text.

The annotations seek to explicate the contexts of the novel. Lewis's fiction is consistent with his Christian belief, his apologetical and ethical writings, and his critical work, and draws on a wide range of influences: the annotations explicate these points, as well us providing historical information and explaining allusions that may have become unclear with the passage of time.

This edition concludes with three appendices. Appendix A provides a variorum presentation of the extant manuscript fragments and the corresponding passages in the three first editions of the novel. Appendix B explores the internal chronology of the novel, which is not always consistent. Appendix C demonstrates an unexpected example of *That Hideous Strength*'s influence, showing Peter O'Donnell's borrowings in some of his crime thrillers.