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Book review of: *Inkling, Historian, Soldier, and Brother: A Life of Warren Hamilton Lewis* by Don W. King

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most important tasks of education. At the same time, it gives us glimpses of a reality to long for, offering nostalgia properly cultivated so that it becomes hope rather than idolatry.

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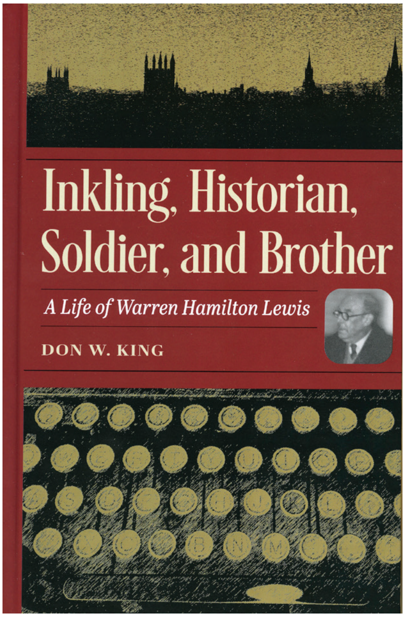
Don W. King, *Inkling, Historian, Soldier, and Brother: A Life of Warren Hamilton Lewis*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2023.

Until very recently, Warren Hamilton "Warnie" Lewis was generally known as the brother of C.S. Lewis or as the Silent Inkling. For a considerable period of time, the only adequate scholarly work dealing with him that was widely available was Clyde S. Kilby and Marjorie Lamp Mead's superb edition of *Brothers and Friends: The Diaries of Major Warren Hamilton Lewis* (1982), which included about ten percent of his 1.2 million-word diary, a comprehensive chronology of his life, two genealogies, and a wealth of information about C.S. Lewis and kindred spirits.


Inkling, Historian, Soldier, and Brother
A Life of Warren Hamilton Lewis
DON W. KING

In the last two decades, availability of scholarship on Warnie Lewis has changed significantly for the better, largely due to the tireless archival research and writing of Don W. King, which are now crowned by his biography of the "other Lewis brother." King, a professor of English at Montreat College and former editor of *Christian Scholar's Review*, has published extensively on Inklings topics, including a book on C.S. Lewis as a poet (2001), a critical biography of Ruth Pitter (2008), a critical study of the works of Joy Davidman (2015), and a collection of essays on Lewis (2013). In addition, he has edited the letters of Joy Davidman (2009) and of Ruth Pitter (2014), as well as the poems of Davidman (2015), Lewis (2015), and Pitter (2018).

In *Inkling, Historian, Soldier, and Brother: A Life of Warren Hamilton Lewis*, King demonstrates his mastery of the extensive Lewis corpus, both published and unpublished, as well as his skill in synthesizing a vast quantity of material in a manner that is readable and scholarly at the same time. His primary source is the unpublished Warren H. Lewis diaries at Wheaton College's Marion E. Wade Center, which, given their extensiveness, honesty, and self-insights, are a gold mine of material.

King sees the life of Warnie Lewis as a microcosm of the cultural, social, and military history of England in the twentieth century. His book also argues several other theses: 1) a biography of Warren Lewis is not only important in itself but also casts fresh light on C.S. Lewis's life; 2) Warnie's work as an amateur historian merits more attention than it has been given to date; 3) his role and contribution as an original Inkling deserve more exploration and illumination; 4) his biography provides considerable additional insight into life in the Lewis home, the Kilns; and 5) the role he played during the married life of Jack Lewis and Joy Davidman was significant.

A major motif of the book is King's focus on comparing and contrasting the personalities of Warnie and his brother. The "defining characteristic of Warren's life . . . [was] an approach that was tactile, practical, and utilitarian" (1). This pragmatic, prosaic temperament is contrasted with that of his brother, who was intellectual and rigorously logical, yet romantically poetic, imaginative, and intuitive. Put another way, King opposes the sanguine melancholy of Jack Lewis (think Reepicheep) to the phlegmatic melancholy of Warnie Lewis (think Trufflehunter). Jack, in the end, was "surprised by joy" and was a pessimistic optimist, while Warnie, who started out as a "hail fellow, well met," became a rather pessimistic introvert in later life. Some historians might object to the speculative nature of this scheme—some parallels are a bit of a stretch—but as a heuristic device it does have its usefulness. In short, argues King, Warnie Lewis was left-brained and Jack Lewis was right-brained. At the same time, King does not ignore similarities between the two brothers. (This motif is explored in some detail in the epilogue.)

The book is organized straightforwardly along chronological lines, with an introduction followed by a chronology of Warnie Lewis' s life, then seven chapters, an epilogue, an appendix on Warnie's military service, forty-eight pages of notes, a comprehensive bibliography, and an index. Also included are a number of pertinent illustrations.

The initial chapter on Warnie's early life contains, on the whole, few surprises, owing to Jack Lewis's *Surprised by Joy* (1955). The impact of boarding schooling on Warnie is made graphically clear for the first time, especially the long-term effects on him of Wynyard School. However, we get a quite different, positive picture of Malvern College from Warnie than we do from Jack. Warnie's experiences with W. T. Kirkpatrick, in contrast, readily confirm the impressions we get from Jack's memories. An apropos example of King's motif shows up here in regard to reading: though both boys were prodigious readers, Jack read for imaginative and aesthetic reasons; Warnie "primarily for pleasure and information" (5).

Chapter 2 deals with the Great War. For the first time, we have a detailed, lengthy account of Warnie's wartime career. King convincingly argues that the war "was the central shaping influence on his life. However, his life was not defined solely by the Great War; he emerged from it scarred, but not defeated nor crippled" (53). He reached manhood as a result of the war and experienced the wider world. He also became a writer: his extensive letters and diary already evinced that eye for picaresque detail, character sketches, and winsome description that became hallmarks of his style. Because of his duty to procure supplies from French sources, he also became fluent in French.

King also shows how the war contributed to Warnie's chronic alcoholism. Ironically, his father had repeatedly warned him about the dangers of drinking. It was precisely because Albert Lewis tried to impose his views on him that Warnie ignored such advice, and, like many of his fellow officers, drank heavily and excessively, with evident and unfortunate long-run effects that were a trial for both Lewis brothers.

The subject of chapter 3 is Warnie's postwar army career, ending in 1932 when he retired. Demobilization of the British army was chaotic and inequitable, and the problems of what we now call PTSD were poorly if at all understood. Warnie as a career officer was not in the same predicament as most were, but King emphasizes that the tumult of the war and what followed played a definite role in his transition from a mostly gregarious extrovert to a pessimistic, depressed personality and alcoholic.

Fortunately for him, Warnie's military career—including overseas tours of duty in Belgium, France, Sierra Leone, and China—was not particularly taxing and, though often extremely boring, afforded him ample time for leisure pursuits, including reading, writing, and, unfortunately, heavy drinking. He especially disliked the climate, temperature, and fauna (snakes, cockroaches) of Africa and held typical European stereotypes of the "natives." In 1919, while stationed in France, Warnie came across the Duc de Saint-Simon's *Memoirs*: he "bought it as a change from French novels, and became a life-addict to the period" (57). This would later lead to the writing of books on *Le Grand Siècle*.

During this time, Warnie had to contend with the unhealthy relationship he and Jack had with their father. They tended to belittle, ridicule, and mock their father behind his back, something they later regretted. Warnie also wrestled with Jack's connection with Mrs. Janie Moore. Warnie and Albert were puzzled and concerned about that relationship, as they suspected Moore of being an adventuress of some sort. Nonetheless, choosing to retire and settle down in Oxford with Jack, Janie Moore, and her daughter Maureen was one of two important decisions Warnie made toward the end of his army career, and they jointly purchased what became their permanent Oxford home, the Kilns. The second important decision was that just as Jack was beginning intellectually to move toward Christianity, Warnie was doing the same thing experientially in Asia. This proved to be gratifying to both brothers.

"Beginning the Business of Living (1933-1939)" is the title of Chapter 4. The title reflects Warnie's disillusionment with military service: now that he had done his time for God, King, and Country, he could begin to live "my real life" (85). This meant, first of all, life at the Kilns with his brother and the Moore family. His diary accounts in the 1930s give the impression that the Lewis ménage was full of much music, theatre, conversation, and fun. Warnie also devoted time to canal motor boating during these years, exploring the extensive canal system of the British midlands in his ditch crawler, the "Bosphorus," and publishing several engaging articles in a boating aficionados' magazine. And King covers in detail another favorite activity of the Lewis brothers: walking tours of the British countryside. Warnie's diary accounts of these eight trips show his "sharp eye for detail, deft description of landscapes and weather, astute observations about churches, hotels, and inns. . . . Most noteworthy is how Warnie's walking tour entries illustrate a deep and abiding love of nature" (110).

It was during this period that Warnie was involved in what he regarded as the very pleasant task of compiling and editing the Lewis Papers, covering 1850 to 1930, which he completed in 1934. This remains the principal repository of information on the Lewis family and is in itself a major work of history. Few people know this trove as well as King does, and he has put it to good and important use. Warnie's diary on the Inklings' gatherings during these years is also the best source of information on these meetings, which have become legendary because of the participation of Jack Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams, and others. Some credit Warnie with being the cohesive social glue of the group. All in all, King concludes that the "years 1933-1939 were arguably the happiest of Warnie's life" (112).

Chapter 5, on 1939-1951, is the thinnest—partly because none of Warnie's letters from this period survive, and he did not keep a diary from January 1939 to February 1943. It is clear, King contends, that "Warnie's life . . . was a turning away from happiness toward a drifting, sobering, uncertain future" (115). In 1939, he was recalled to active duty in World War II in France, but in 1940 he was demobbed, probably because of age and ill health, not alcoholism as has been alleged. Additionally, life at the Kilns was no longer happy: Janie Moore was sinking into dementia, and Warnie moved from irritation to actual detestation of her. King points out that though many have argued with Warnie's views of Moore, he was the only one who lived in daily contact with her. Mrs. Moore died in 1951.

This chapter has an extended section on Warnie's alcoholism. Buffeted by the war, by insufferable conditions at the Kilns, and by extended post-war rationing and hardships, Warnie completed his downward spiral into acute alcoholism. It is difficult to know the effect of this on Jack Lewis in the last two decades of his life, but King contends that it must have been considerable. Nevertheless, in the mid-forties, Warnie Lewis did find purpose. He took over as Jack's secretary and continued to chronicle the doings of the Inklings during one of their most fruitful periods.

Chapter 6 is devoted to Warnie as a historian and to his reactions to the entry of Joy Davidman into Jack's life. Though Warnie was a crusty old bachelor and possibly embittered toward women in Jack's life because of Mrs. Moore, he soon fell under the spell of Joy, much to the relief and gratitude of his brother. He was as devastated as Jack was by Joy's illness and death in 1960.

During the war, he continued to develop his fondness for French memoirs and diaries into studies of seventeenth-century France, eventually publishing six books, the first of which has become a classic: *The Splendid Century: Some Aspects of French Life in the Reign of Louis XIV* (1953). King is very high on Warnie's historical productions, each of which is briefly summarized and analyzed. He commends him for focusing on milieu rather than on the usual political or military matters. "His strengths . . . are collation, distillation, illustration, revisiting, sketching, summarizing, and tracing, traits similar to the ones he drew on while compiling the *Lewis Papers*" (152).

The final chapter's title, "Men Must Endure (1960-1973)," is an apt summary of the last years of Warnie's life. By 1960, his beloved brother and closest friend was in obviously deteriorating health. Warnie feared that he would outlive Jack and was mistakenly convinced that this would plunge him into financial ruin and poverty. Having remained sober for considerable periods when Davidman was with them, he now plunged into drinking himself into hospital once more. He had fallen so low that in 1963, when Jack's life was coming to a close, Warnie—totally unable to cope—fled to Ireland on a four-month binge and dry out. Returning only shortly before his brother's death in November, he was a great comfort to Jack, and their last six weeks together were as happy as their boyhood had been.

Following his brother's death, Warren Lewis published the *Letters of C.S. Lewis* (1966), which contains a memoir that constitutes the first biography of C.S. Lewis. King gives a full account of the difficulties involved in this project. Despite the publisher's fears about potentially low sales and Warnie's ire at how his original manuscript had been edited, both the letters and the memoir were well-received. The final seven years of Warnie's life were mostly spent in retreat into his private world (other than his responsibilities for Jack's two stepsons, David and Douglas). He reread his diary and compiled a collection of excerpts under the rubric of "Happy Times." Tellingly, 66% of these were from the 1930-1939 period, and none were from after 1955.

He also was concerned for his brother's estate and consequently had a rocky relationship with Walter Hooper, who had taken Jack's place in managing issues connected with Warnie's alcoholism (which Warnie somewhat resented) and the administration of Jack's estate (which Warnie was suspicious of). Yet an unexpected pleasure for Warnie during this time was the friendship he developed with Clyde S. Kilby. This relationship prospered to such an extent that Warnie saw to it that Kilby's emerging center for the study of C.S. Lewis and others at Wheaton (now the Marion E. Wade Center) received the Lewis Papers, his own diaries, *Boxen,* family photographs, and more.

Don King's book is a first-rate piece of work that successfully achieves his goals (and more) in a clear, well-organized, and highly readable fashion. It will reward scholars invested in Inklings studies, but at the same time it is accessible to readers who know little or nothing about them. Highly recommended.

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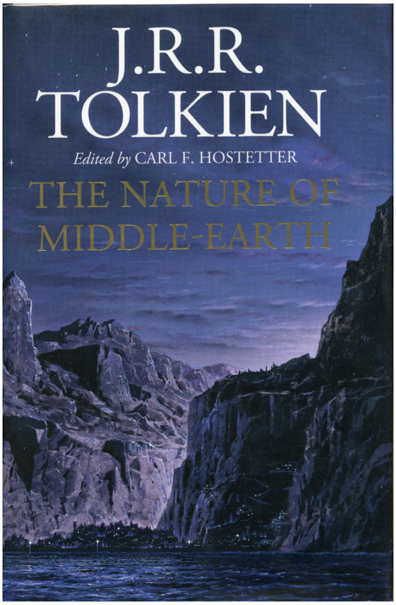
J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Nature of Middle-earth: Late Writings on the Lands, Inhabitants, and Metaphysics of Middle-earth,* edited by Carl F. Hostetter. New York: HarperCollins, 2021.

This volume contains a variety of J.R.R. Tolkien's writings about Middle-earth, along with detailed notes from editor Carl F. Hostetter about the state and dating of the manuscripts and how various pieces relate to each other. As suggested by the title, the pieces are biological, geological, and philosophical in nature rather than narrative, with topics that include how quickly Elves age; the relationships between body, mind, and spirit; and the physical nature of Eä (the created universe) and Arda (the realm of Manwë where Elves, Men, and Dwarves dwell). Not surprisingly, much of the work relates to linguistics and the philology of Elven languages.



The writings come from the mid 1950s through the early 1970s and range in length from a paragraph to several pages. Some were carefully written on clean paper, and others were hastily scrawled on the backs of scraps. In most cases, the date can be narrowed to a relatively small window based on the paper. Although some of the writings take the form of essays that might have been