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A Postscript on Kenneth Morris (1879-1937)

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The phrase "conquest of nature" is certainly one of the most objectionable and misleading expressions of Western languages. It reflects the illusion that all natural forces can be entirely controlled, and it expresses the criminal conceit that nature is to be considered primarily as a source of raw materials and energy for human purposes. This view of man's relationship to nature is philosophically untenable and destructive. A relationship to the earth based only on its use for economic enrichment is bound to result not only in its degradation but also in the devaluation of human life. This is a perversion which, if not corrected, will become a fatal disease of technological societies.⁴⁴

Dubos also argues that human civilization is in part a development of human response to a landscape, and to the way men tend to humanize a natural setting and accommodate themselves to it.⁴⁵ This line of thought would support the superiority of Cure Hardy, rich in its traditions and relationship to nature, to whatever kind of experimental village the N.I.C.E. or any other technocratic "think tank" might devise.

For Dubos, too, man's relationship with nature is not a simple matter of biological survival; it always tends to take on transcendental implications. From an age of secular science, he suggests, "we may...be moving to a higher level of religion."

Science is at present evolving from the description of concrete objects and events to the study of relationships as observed in complex systems. We may be about to recapture an experience of harmony, an intimation of the divine, from our scientific knowledge of the processes through which the earth became prepared for human life, and of the mechanisms through which man relates to the universe as a

whole. A truly ecological view of the world has religious overtones.⁴⁶

And Loren Eiseley, the anthropologist, argues that man's nature will not allow him to be content with his technological wonderland. Unless man's nature is to be changed to something other than human, he "is almost bound to grow alienated from his world, his fellows, and the objects around him. He suffers from a nostalgia for which there is no remedy upon earth except as it is to be found in the enlightenment of the spirit—some ability to have a perceptible rather than an exploitative relationship with his fellow creatures."⁴⁷ Man's hunger will not be satisfied with a mere return to a saner relationship to the ecosystem; he has "the desire for transcendence—a peculiarly human trait."⁴⁸

Finally, there is Theodore Roszak, the historian, who like Mumford, has joined Lewis in attacking the "myth of objective consciousness."⁴⁹ Roszak, in *Where the Wasteland Ends*, not only makes an impassioned call for humans to leave the technological wasteland behind and return to a closer relationship with nature; but he also urges people to seek for experiences of spiritual transcendence in their human and ecological experience.⁵⁰ Roszak, in fact, turns out, perhaps unexpectedly, to be a prophet of an ecological life which is ultimately sacramental.

Examples could be multiplied of recent thinkers who seem to have arrived at some of Lewis's conclusions. On the other hand, not all men and women, and certainly not all scientists and scholars (and especially not behaviorists like B.F. Skinner) would be prepared to accept Lewis's ecological views in his fiction or in *The Abolition of Man*—just as there is no likelihood that all people are on the verge of accepting Lewis's religious beliefs. The myths of Technocratic Man which Lewis attacked are still with us. But they are under stronger pressure now than when Lewis wrote, and saner and richer myths are being offered to replace them. Nevertheless, it has taken our world quite a while to catch up with some of the insights of C.S. Lewis.

⁴⁴ *A God Within*, 40-41.

⁴⁵ *A God Within*, 144-52.

⁴⁶ *A God Within*, 144-52. ⁴⁷ *A God Within*, 42-43.

⁴⁸ *A God Within*, 42-43.

⁴⁹ Loren Eiseley, *The Invisible Pyramid* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), 146. ⁵⁰ *The Invisible Pyramid*, 145.

⁴⁸ *The Invisible Pyramid*, 145.

⁴⁹ Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1969), 205-38.

⁵⁰ Roszak, *Where the Wasteland Ends* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1973), 425-27.

A Postscript on Kenneth Morris (1879-1937)

—by Dainis Bisenieks in reference to his article "Finder of the Welsh Gods" in *Mythlore* 11.

Ella Young, herself a mythographer and fantasist, devoted several chapters of her memoir *Flowering Dusk* (N.Y., 1945) to Morris, quoting from his letters and his original and translated verse. He was born in Wales (and died there); we have a reminiscence of his childhood. He was a member of a Theosophical circle together with AE (George Russell), became a disciple of Katherine Tingley, and moved to the Point Loma community in 1908. In 1930 he returned to Wales and spent the last seven years of his life working on behalf of Theosophy.

Morris was the author of essays, poems, and verse plays besides the stories and prose romances. A number of works were published in Theosophical magazines; others remain unpublished, and who knows where they are preserved? He was interested in Chinese poetry and thought its complex forms could be rendered only by other complex forms. "Free verse! I hate it royally...." Emmett A. Greenwalt in *The Point Loma Community in California 1897-1942* (Berkeley, 1955) records that he also left a work on ancient Mexico, "The Chalchuhuite Dragon."

The National Union Catalog is now well past M, and only the Library of Congress has *The Secret Mountain*; a couple of others have *The Fates of the Princes of Dyfed*. Patience...

