

THE CARAVAN

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF LOREN EISELEY

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Loren Corey Eiseley
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"We have joined the caravan, you might say, at a certain point; we will travel as far as we can, but we cannot in one lifetime see all that we would like to see or learn all that we hunger to know."

-- *The Immense Journey*

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Board member Naomi Brill has retired from the Eiseley Board. An original member of our board, she has served continuously since the beginning. She was one of the advisors for the recent production of the Eiseley video and was one of those interviewed on the program. During the time we have known each other, she has revised several editions of her classic text in social work, *Working with People*. Naomi has brought wise counsel and a kind heart to our board matters. We are also losing Mike Antrim, who is moving to California. Mike organized and ran our web site, which has received high praise on the world wide web.

We have two new board members--Florence Lueninghoener and Deborah Derrick. Florence was recently given an honorary doctorate by Midland Lutheran College. Her late husband Gilbert was a second cousin of Loren Eiseley. Deb is taking a master's degree in environmental writing, and was a member of the first honors class in Eiseley given at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. A second honors class will be offered this fall at UN-L led by Board member Dr. Mary Liz Jameson, who received the first Loren Eiseley Scholarship Essay Award some years ago.

The 7th Nebraska Literature Festival will be held at Wayne State College on Saturday, September 19th. The theme is "The World in the Plains: Plains Literature as World Literature." Dimitri Breschinsky of Purdue University, who has translated Eiseley into Russian, will present our program. The festival was named the "top state literary project in the nation" by the National Center for the Book of the Library of Congress in 1997, and the Nebraska Center for the Book was awarded the first \$5,000 Daniel J. Boorstin prize.

We are happy to report that the University of Nebraska Press will continue to reprint Eiseley's books. *The Invisible Pyramid* will be reissued this fall. The press is also reissuing Wright Morris's *Home Place*. Wright Morris died in April at age 88, in Mill Valley California. He was a good friend of Loren Eiseley and his death marks the end of an era. The Lone Tree Literary Society of Central City honors Wright Morris.

Kira Gale, President



LOREN EISELEY IN OIL

This portrait of a certain university student, one Loren Eiseley, was painted by Elizabeth Ferguson Bitney in the late '20's for her course in painting at the University. Elizabeth brought her two Eiseley paintings to show the Friends at their spring meeting held at Bert and Marian Schultz's home in June of 1984. Her other portrait, very similar to this one, showed her subject more in profile. She told us that she was an art major at the University and that students could earn pocket money for sitting as subjects for the art students. Loren Eiseley was willing to pose only if he could read a book during the ordeal so both her portraits of him showed him with his book. She said, "He had strong features. . . He was a very interesting person to paint."

This picture was presented in the Lincoln Journal-Star in 1984 and again on February 1, 1998. We are grateful for their permission to reprint it for you in this issue.

Sociologists To Hear About Eiseley

We appreciate the opportunity to offer the following material which our friend Michael R. Hill will be presenting to the History of Sociology Section of the American Sociological Association in San Francisco at their annual meeting this coming August. Michael is a Nebraska writer and interdisciplinary scholar with earned doctorates in both sociology and geography from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He has taught in several disciplines at Albion College, Iowa State University, Iowa Western Community College, University of Minnesota-Duluth, University of Nebraska at Omaha, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His many publications include *Archival Strategies and Techniques* (Sage, 1993) and the sesqui-centennial edition of Harriet Martineau's *How to Observe Morals and Manners* (Transaction, 1989). His sociological edition of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *With Her in Ourland: Sequel to "Herland"* (Greenwood Press, 1997) was co-edited with his life-partner, Mary Jo Deegan. His Ph.D. dissertation on "Roscoe Pound and American Sociology" focuses in part on the early years of sociology at the University of Nebraska.

Loren Eiseley And Sociology At The University Of Nebraska¹

Michael R. Hill

Introduction

Loren Eiseley's little-recognized graduate studies in sociology at the University of Nebraska played a crucial role in launching his professional career in academia. Throughout 1935-36, an intense year of advanced graduate work in Lincoln, Eiseley built a solid foundation in sociology, including: required coursework, assistantship duties, research, publication, participation in the local chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta (the national sociology honorary), and, perhaps most important, earning the admiration and support of University of Nebraska sociologists James M.

Reinhardt and Joyce O. Hertzler. Thus, when Eiseley applied in 1937 for his first full-time academic position, at the University of Kansas, a position specifically requiring expertise in anthropology and sociology, Eiseley legitimately presented himself as a well-trained sociologist--in concert with advanced anthropological preparation obtained at the University of Pennsylvania.

Loren Eiseley was the beneficiary of a full year of graduate-level sociological training in 1935-36 at the University of Nebraska under the tutelage of sociology professors Hertzler² and Reinhardt.³ The strategic importance of this fact for Eiseley's subsequent career, while not altogether ignored by Eiseley's biographers, is insufficiently stressed by most authorities. Eiseley eventually rose to prominence as an anthropologist and essayist, but that happy professional outcome is rooted as much in Eiseley's formal sociological mentoring as it is in his anthropological education and youthful experiences as a writer and avid bone-hunter. I do not dispute the proper claims that anthropology, archaeology, and English lay upon Loren Eiseley when naming him as "one of their own," but it is equally fair to underscore the structural centrality of yet another institutional sponsor of Eiseley's accomplishments: the discipline of sociology. As a member of the sociological fraternity, I add yet another voice to the interdisciplinary chorus--to also claim Loren Eiseley as "one of our own."

Correcting the Record

Nebraskan accounts of Eiseley's academic training and career often omit mention of his graduate work in sociology.⁴ For example, when Lincoln's *Evening State Journal* reported Eiseley's 1940 receipt of a prestigious post-doctoral research fellowship from the Social Science Research Council, Eiseley's academic life was summarized, in part, as follows:

Dr. Eiseley received his A.B. degree at the University of Nebraska in 1933, having specialized in anthropology under Dr. William

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²Joyce Oramel Hertzler, (AB '16 Baldwin-Wallace; graduate study '16-17 Harvard. Univ.; MA '19, PhD '20, U. Wis.), professor and chair of the department of sociology at the University of Nebraska.

³James Melvin Reinhardt, (AB '23 Berea; summer study '24 & '25 U. Chicago.; MA '25, PhD '29 U. N. Dak.), associate professor of sociology and, later, chair of the department of sociology at the University of Nebraska.

⁴Most recently, Robert Knoll (1995: 85) briefly references Eiseley as "a naturalist" and notes only his association with Lowry Wimberly, University of Nebraska professor of English and editor of the *Prairie Schooner*.

Duncan Strong, well-known American anthropologist now at Columbia University. Following his graduation, Dr. Eiseley completed his doctoral work at the University of Pennsylvania, where he held the Harrison Scholarship in 1934-35 and the Harrison fellowship in anthropology in 1936-37. Immediately following the completing of his Ph.D. at Pennsylvania, he was appointed assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Kansas.⁵

While correct, as a crude outline, the newspaper article makes several crucial errors of omission. Not only was Eiseley appointed to a dual position at Kansas as a *sociologist-anthropologist*, he also double-majored at Nebraska, as an undergraduate (from 1926 to 1933), in *sociology* (with a concentration in anthropology) and in English. Anthropology, to the limited extent then offered at the University of Nebraska, was located within the sociology department. William Duncan Strong⁶ taught anthropological and archaeological courses important to Eiseley's under-graduate education, yet Strong was but one of the social scientists who taught Eiseley during his undergraduate days.

Core components of Eiseley's official undergraduate major in sociology also included completion of: Soc. 9 (Introduction to Sociology); Soc. 109 (Criminology); Soc. 115 (Social Psychology); Soc. 117 (Social Econ); Soc. 118 (Social Progress); Soc. 133 (Social Origins); and Soc. 135 (Primitive Religions). In sum, Eiseley completed nearly half of the formal coursework in his undergraduate major in *sociology* courses, courses taught by sociologists Hertzler, Reinhardt, and others.

This pattern of "double training" also marked Eiseley's subsequent graduate studies. True, as the *Evening State Journal* reported, Eiseley went on to the University of Pennsylvania and completed a masters degree in anthropology in 1935. But, Eiseley then returned to Lincoln and, during the 1935-36 academic year, completed all of the required, formal coursework for a masters degree in *sociology* before again journeying to Philadelphia to pursue the doctorate in anthropology. This "missing year" of Eiseley's graduate sociological training, 1935-36, and its significance, merit closer inspection.

Graduate Sociology Assistant, 1935-36

When Loren Eiseley returned to Lincoln after completing a masters degree in 1935, he applied to and was accepted for further graduate study in the Department of Sociology at the University of Nebraska. The serious nature of his work and his formal status in the Department of Sociology during 1935-36 is attested by his appointment as a graduate assistant and by the courses he completed. Graduate study in sociology at Nebraska then required the completion of Soc. 323-324 (a two-credit, two-semester sequence in the History of Sociological Thought) and Soc. 327-328 (a three-credit, two-semester sequence in Sociological Theory and Methods). Eiseley completed both sequences, then taught by Professor J. O. Hertzler, earning a total of 10 credit hours. For electives, Eiseley took Soc. 351-352 (a five-hour, two-semester sequence of Research in Social Psychology) taught by Associate Professor James Reinhardt and earned 10 additional credit hours. Inasmuch as the masters degree required a total of 30 credit hours, of which 6-10 hours could be earned by writing a thesis, Eiseley completed all requirements to earn a masters in sociology *except* for writing a formal thesis.⁷ Indeed, he was nearly A.B.D. ("all but dissertation") for a doctorate in sociology.

Eiseley was well situated in 1936 to complete a doctorate in sociology at Nebraska if Philadelphia had not lured him away. His masters from Pennsylvania counted for 30 of the 90 hours required for a Ph.D. at Lincoln. By the close of 1935-36, he had amassed 20 additional hours of credit (including all required courses). Having also completed the foreign language requirement, he needed only ten hours more of formal course work in sociology plus the standard dissertation-- together with a "pass" on the requisite comprehensive examination--to complete a Nebraska doctorate. Pragmatically, Eiseley was only one semester's coursework short of being A.B.D. in sociology at Nebraska when he left again for Philadelphia.

Eiseley wrote neither thesis nor dissertation at Nebraska, but, this was not exceptional--for Eiseley. When he completed the doctorate at the University of

⁵*Evening State Journal* (Lincoln, Nebraska), April 17, 1940: 4

⁶William Duncan Strong, (AB '23, PhD '26 Univ. Calif.), professor of anthropology at University of Nebraska 1929-31, and, later, professor of anthropology at Columbia

⁷In exactly like manner, Mabel Eiseley completed everything for a masters degree in English at Nebraska--except the thesis (Christianson 1990: 167)

Pennsylvania, his anthropology supervisors did not exact the required doctoral dissertation (Christianson 1990: 172-73). Since the dissertation is the hallmark of advanced graduate study, Eiseley's case represents an extraordinary lapse by the University of Pennsylvania. In sharp contrast, although Eiseley completed all required courses--except the mandatory thesis--for a masters at Nebraska, there was no casual winking at requirements in Lincoln--and no graduate degree.

Eiseley's sociological training at Nebraska is mentioned in Gale Christianson's biography of Eiseley, but almost as an aside. He asserts, for example (Christianson 1990: 164), that Eiseley--with a bachelor's degree from Nebraska and a freshly-minted master's degree from Pennsylvania--was "virtually penniless" and "had no choice but to [return to Lincoln and] move back in with his mother, aunt, and grandmother." Albeit 1935 fell within the Great Depression, it still bears asking whether a talented, experienced man with Eiseley's outstanding academic credentials--even if he was in hard straits financially--really *had no choice* other than to return to Lincoln, re-enter the University of Nebraska, accept a graduate assistantship, and undertake the disciplined rigors of full-time graduate study in sociology.

Viewed less negatively, the sociology program at Nebraska offered Eiseley an affirming opportunity to more fully pursue a discipline cognate to anthropology under the tutelage of trusted mentors: Professors J. O. Hertzler and James Reinhardt. Eiseley had taken sociology courses from both men during his undergraduate years in Lincoln; he knew their temperaments and skills. Structurally, the graduate assistantship offered by the sociology department at Nebraska provided Eiseley with a Spartan but livable salary.⁸

It may be that Eiseley's future academic plans at this time were "shifting and uncertain" (Christianson 1990:

164), but the Nebraska sociology program clearly offered intellectual coherence, emotional shelter, and financial sustenance--and should be recognized for having done so. When Eiseley returned to Lincoln in 1935, he chose neither to pursue advanced studies in the Department of English (the locale of his second undergraduate major at Nebraska), nor to enroll in Soc. 331-332 (Research in Anthropology), then under the energetic direction of Earl H. Bell⁹ (a new Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin who filled the Nebraska anthropology position vacated by William Duncan Strong). Both English and anthropology would have been natural options, given the conventional wisdoms concerning Eiseley's intellectual predilections. Instead, he enrolled in a program of advanced sociological study.

Following a highly successful first semester (earning an "A" in Soc. 323, an "A" in Soc. 351, and a "Pass" in Soc. 327), Eiseley continued his coursework during the spring of 1936. He was deeply immersed in full-time sociological studies that spring, whereas Eiseley's biographer, Gale Christianson (1990: 165-66), instead emphasized Loren's part-time work writing a chapter on Nebraska's geology for a WPA-sponsored Writers' Project guide edited by Rudolph Umland. Of Eiseley's much more major project at that time, Christianson (1990: 169) says only:

While German troops occupied the Rhineland and the electorate rewarded Hitler with 99 percent of its vote, Loren completed a second semester of noncredit German and some additional course work in sociology.¹⁰

Christianson's dismissive phrase (i.e., "some additional course work ") does not capture the rigorous nature and intellectual coherence of the program on which Eiseley embarked. Soc. 324 and Soc. 328 were core, required courses, the second halves of an integrated, year-long program of sequential sociological study.

⁸Students on assistantship stipends typically secured room and board in Lincoln, thus making Eiseley's decision to live with his mother more a matter of choice than forced necessity

⁹Earl Hoyt Bell, (AB '25 Iowa State Univ.; PhD '31 Univ. Wis.), assistant professor in anthropology at University of Nebraska, and, later, chairman of sociology and anthropology department at Syracuse University

¹⁰Emphasis added. Work designed to meet graduate degree language requirements was (and still is) typically completed on a noncredit basis

Eiseley again had a good term during the spring semester, earning a "B+" in Soc 324, an "A" in Soc 352, and another "Pass" in Soc 328.

Eiseley's two semesters of noncredit German were necessary not only to present himself as a candidate for a Harrison fellowship at Pennsylvania, as he did eventually, but also for advanced degrees at Nebraska. Strategically, Eiseley positioned himself for fellowships at Pennsylvania, and, simultaneously, met the formal language requirement for advanced graduate study at Nebraska. Eiseley's academic program at Nebraska, including assistantship duties, graduate sociology course work, and two courses in German comprised a serious, full-time academic load.

Eiseley's Special Relationship with Reinhardt

A stable support for Eiseley in the Nebraska sociology program was James M. Reinhardt, an Associate Professor of Sociology. Reinhardt's importance to Eiseley was much greater than Christianson's (1990: 167) passing observation that when Lowry Wimberly and Eiseley drifted apart, "Loren began palling around with James M. Reinhardt, a Georgia-born sociology professor." Reinhardt was, as noted above, the instructor for the two semesters of Research in Social Psychology in which Eiseley earned 10 hours of graduate credit and two "A" grades. Reinhardt and Eiseley, professor and student, pursued "the unsolved problems of present-day social psychology."¹¹ Hence, it is not remarkable that they talked long hours together--regardless of the state of Eiseley's relationship with Wimberly.

In fact, Reinhardt's association with Eiseley began when Loren was still an undergraduate, and the affiliation grew beyond the classroom to include Reinhardt's wife, Cora Lee. She recalled that "Jim and I first met [Mabel and Loren Eiseley] in 1931 at the University of Nebraska"¹² during Loren's undergraduate period. The centrality of Jim Reinhardt to Eiseley's career is recounted in the following note written by Mabel Eiseley to Cora Lee following James' death in 1974:

We were both exceedingly fond of Jim, as you know, and even though we have not seen him for some years we always felt that he was nearby.

His generosity--and yours too--to Loren will not be forgotten. He gave encouragement and practical help at a time when such help meant a great deal. His whole career might have been much different had he not encountered such understanding.¹³

Reinhardt's "practical help" included getting Loren published as a sociologist.

In a book that has escaped Eiseley's biographers, Professor Reinhardt made room for what became Eiseley's (1938: 229-44) first publication in a sociological context. Loren's research in Reinhardt's courses impressed the elder sociologist so greatly that he included Loren's analysis of "culture and personality" as a chapter in his then forthcoming book on *Social Psychology: An Introduction to the Study of Personality and the Environment*. Proudly, the Nebraska professor pointed to this work when recommending Eiseley for a teaching post at the University of Kansas.

Entering the Academic Marketplace

Following his year of graduate sociology study at Nebraska, Eiseley returned to Pennsylvania, a decision facilitated by winning a Harrison fellowship (a considerably more lucrative award than his assistantship at Nebraska). Later, coincident with the doctorate in anthropology from Pennsylvania (*sans* official dissertation!), Eiseley entered the academic marketplace in 1937. His first job offer, however, came not from an anthropologist, but from a sociologist: Carroll D. Clark¹⁴ of Kansas.

The Department of Sociology at the University of Kansas sought a new faculty member who could teach *both* sociology and anthropology, a situation for which

¹¹Course description for Soc. 351-352, *Bulletin of the University of Nebraska*, Catalog Issue, 1936, pp. 400-401.

¹²Annotation by Cora Lee Reinhardt on envelope containing Mabel Eiseley to Mrs. James M. Reinhardt, 17 May 1974, James M. Reinhardt Papers, Box 3, Folder 1974, University Archives, Love Library, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

¹³Mabel Eiseley to Mrs. James M. Reinhardt, 17 May 1974, Reinhardt Papers.

¹⁴Carroll D. Clark, (AB '22, MA '25 U. Kans.; PhD '31 U. Chicago.), professor and chair, department of sociology University of Kansas.

Eiseley's dual training made him especially qualified. The support Eiseley garnered from sociologists in his quest for this position needs emphasis, because Christianson's (1990) account of the campaign neglects the central role played by Eiseley's sociological champions. It is true, as Christianson (1990: 176) noted, that Pennsylvania anthropologist Frank Speck¹⁵ wrote to Clark on Eiseley's behalf and that:

During the next month at least six others wrote on his behalf, including Duncan Strong, Dwight Kirsch,¹⁶ James M. Reinhardt, and Lowry Wimberly,¹⁷ who described him as a young man possessed of a "striking personality, a good voice, and a sympathetic and loyal nature."

The "others," however, included Professor J. O. Hertzler, the well-known *chairman* of the Department of Sociology at the University of Nebraska, and Professor W. Rex Crawford, *chairman* of the Department of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania.

Hertzler's Recommendation

Kansas' Carroll Clark was, first and foremost, a sociologist and it is thus no small matter that Hertzler, an influential scholar, wrote on Eiseley's behalf. Testimony to Hertzler's strong regional reputation is the fact that when the Midwest Sociological Society was formed in April, 1937, at a meeting in Des Moines, Iowa, Hertzler was elected

vice-president and, the following year, president of that new organization.¹⁸

Hertzler's letter, uncited by Christianson, is an instructive document. On February 22, 1937, Hertzler wrote to Clark:

Mr. Loren C. Eiseley is a candidate for a position as sociologist-anthropologist in your department.

I have known Mr. Eiseley as an undergraduate and graduate student since about 1925. He has an excellent analytical mind and a broad culture, his scholarship is conscientious and profound, he is highly versatile, and has an attractive personality. I need not mention his work in Anthropology because you have been fully informed regarding that by Dr. Speck and others. I may add that he also has an excellent preparation in Sociology, majoring in the subject as an under-graduate with us and last year he put in a full year in this Department and was by all odds the pick of the graduate students. Also, as you know, he has taken considerable work in Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania under Crawford¹⁹ and Bossard.²⁰

I would consider him a valuable addition to any department; in fact we would like to have him here if funds were available. I believe also that due to his broad intellectual and cultural interests he would soon become a distinctive person in any faculty.²¹

¹⁵Frank Gouldsmith Speck, (AB '04 Columbia; MA '05 Univ. Penn.), professor of anthropology at University of Pennsylvania, and president of the American Folklore Society, 1920-22. Christianson (1990: 176) observed appreciatively that Speck "composed a glowing, five-page testimonial" on Eiseley's behalf, but it should be noted that the apparent relative length of Speck's letter results from its being handwritten in large script, whereas Hertzler's and Reinhardt's letters were typed.

¹⁶Frederick Dwight Kirsch, Jr., (BA '15, Univ. Nebr.); artist, director of galleries and, later, chair of the art department at the University of Nebraska.

¹⁷Lowry Charles Wimberly, (BA '16, MA '20, PhD '25, Univ. Nebr.), professor of English and editor of the *Prairie Schooner*, University of Nebraska.

¹⁸For documentation, see, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (June 1937: 416), and Hertzler (1938). Carroll Clark was also elected to the presidency of the Midwest Sociological Society, in 1941, as was James Reinhardt for the years 1942-44.

¹⁹William Rex Crawford, (PhD '26, Univ. Penn.), chair of the department of sociology, University of Pennsylvania.

²⁰James Herbert Seward Bossard, (AB '09 Muhlenberg; MA '11, PhD '17 Univ. Penn.), professor of sociology in the medical school, University of Pennsylvania.

²¹Hertzler to Clark, 22 February 1937, Carroll Clark Papers, Correspondence, Eiseley 1937-1978, Series No. PP/1, Box 4, folder 19 37-1959, University of Kansas Archives, Lawrence, Kansas.

Hertzler underscored several important points: that he had known Eiseley in a professional capacity for more than a decade, that Eiseley was a candidate for a discipline-straddling position as a sociologist-anthropologist, that Eiseley majored in sociology as an undergraduate, that Eiseley's sociological preparation was excellent, and that Hertzler would have liked to have hired Eiseley at Nebraska.

Crawford's Recommendation

Professor W. Rex Crawford wrote to Clark on April 14, 1937, also emphasizing Eiseley's preparation in sociology:

He [Eiseley] has done considerable work in Sociology at the University of Nebraska and here has taken my Seminar in Recent European Social Theory.²²

Crawford pointed to Eiseley's sociological work at Nebraska and noted Eiseley's additional sociological preparation in Philadelphia.

Reinhardt's Recommendation

Nebraska sociologist James Reinhardt also wrote to Clark. On February 20, 1937, Reinhardt penned the following:

I understand that Mr. Loren Eiseley, who is now a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, is applying for a position in your Department.

Mr. Eiseley took his A.B. degree from the University of Nebraska in 1933, and has since done graduate work with us in sociology. He was an assistant in the Department last year, after having completed his master's degree in Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania. He returned to Pennsylvania on a Harrison fellowship this year, to complete work for the Ph.D. degree. All of the work for the Ph.D., including residence requirements and comprehensive examinations, has been done, and only the actual completion of the dissertation remains. The dissertation is now in progress, and part of it has already been accepted for publication by the Anthropological Society of Philadelphia. The entire dissertation should be out of the way by spring.

While Mr. Eiseley is taking the doctorate in the Department of Anthropology at Pennsylvania, he has also had considerable work in sociology both at the University of Nebraska, and at Pennsylvania. He is an especially able student, as suggested by the fact that he was appointed as an assistant in our Department, and that he has been the recipient of two awards at the University of Pennsylvania. These awards, as you probably know, are granted solely on the bases of distinguished scholarship and research ability. I think that during all my experience as a teacher and a director of graduate students in various universities, I have never had a more competent and conscientious student than Mr. Eiseley. He did some excellent research work for me in the field of juvenile delinquency. These investigations included case studies from the courts and from personal interviews, and also a comprehensive analysis and organization of the results of other investigations in the field. He also wrote for me a highly critical study of some other anthropological approaches to problems of personality. I was so impressed with this study that I am using it as a chapter in a forthcoming book on Personality and Social Order, to be published by Lippincott.

Mr. Eiseley has also published in the *American Anthropologist*, and, as indicated above, is a contributor to the forthcoming volume of the Anthropological Society of Philadelphia. He is one of the editors of the *Prairie Schooner*, well-known Midwestern literary quarterly, and has contributed to recognized literary journals. He has had a wide field experience in North American archeology, having served three seasons with the Morrill Paleontological expeditions of the University of Nebraska; with the 1934 expedition to the Southwest, conducted by the University of Pennsylvania Museum; and the expedition of the Smithsonian Institution to Colorado in 1935. He is an active member of Sigma Xi, and of Alpha Kappa Delta. Mr. Eiseley has a genuine interest in people, and is a man of broad sympathies and keen understanding. He enjoys working with students, is co-operative, conscientious, and a gentleman of the first rank. I am glad to recommend him in the highest terms.²³

²²Crawford to Clark, 14 April 1937, Carroll Clark Papers.

²³Reinhardt to Clark, 20 February 1937, Carroll Clark Papers.

Reinhardt's letter is a model of energetic support, and it nicely summarizes Eiseley's interdisciplinary accomplishments at the University of Nebraska.

Conclusion

From sociologists in Nebraska and Pennsylvania, Eiseley received not only advanced training but also a substantive boost upward to a full-time academic position as a sociologist-anthropologist. The record of Eiseley's advanced sociological training at Nebraska and its significance in securing his first professorial appointment are clear. The epilogue, however, has yet to be written. What remains, at the least, is future research that traces the substructure and outcroppings of Eiseley's maturing sociological imagination among his literate essays and ostensibly anthropological musings. Whatever else may be claimed for Loren Eiseley, he was also a sociologist.

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HONORS COLLOQUIUM COURSE ON EISELEY

The first Honors Colloquium Course on Loren Eiseley was conducted in the past fall semester under the leadership of Dr. Bing Chen. Eight students, two of whom were graduate students, met weekly to hear presentations by Darrel Berg, James Estes, Paul Johnsgard, John Janovy, Fred Thomas, Morrie Tuttle, Michael Voorhies and Joseph Wydevan and to otherwise read and discuss the writing and examine issues pertaining to Dr. Eiseley. The Honors Program is under the leadership of Dr. Patrice Berger and the opportunity and support he provided to make this

offering possible is much appreciated. We were very pleased with the quality of the course and the reception it received and that it will be offered again in the coming fall semester under the leadership of Dr. Mary Liz Jameson.

One of the by-products of such a course is some very fine writing done by its students. We are pleased to offer one of these papers in this issue and have plans to present others in future issues. The following essay is by Deborah Derrick, one of the students who is also a new member of our Eiseley Friends Board. She is working on her masters degree in Communications from the University of Nebraska - Omaha. She is particularly interested in environmental writing, having selected the study of women nature writers for her dissertation topic.

FOX FUR ON THE WIRE: LOREN EISELEY'S SHADOW SOUL

By Deborah Derrick

In [the] labyrinth [of the self] where it seems one must trust to blind instinct, there is, von Franz points out, one--only one--consistent rule or "ethic": "Anyone who earns the gratitude of animals, or whom they help for any reason, invariably wins out. This is the only unfailing rule that I have been able to find." Our instinct, in other words, is not blind. The animal does not reason, but sees. And it acts with certainty, it acts "rightly," appropriately. That is why all animals are beautiful. It is the animal who knows the way, the way home. It is the animal within us, the primitive, the dark brother, the shadow soul, who is the guide.

Ursula Le Guin, *The Language of the Night*

There are places where wild prairie grasses grow next to manicured landscapes, where barbed wire fences separate the sunflower forests from man's concrete creations. The fox wanders on the edge, skirting the wild and the civilized, exploring the shadows of inner and outer landscapes. "Weeds grow and animals slip about in the night where no man dares to hunt them," Loren Eiseley writes in *The Night Country* (3). "There are men born to hunt and some few born to flee, whether physically or mentally makes no difference.... The fact that I wear the protective coloration of sedate citizenship is a ruse of the fox--I learned it long ago"(4).

Eiseley's writings are replete with observations, imagery, and metaphor about the animal world. A

cattfish is found frozen in the river (IJ 21-22), a sparrow hawk is released from its captivity (ST 90), his dog Wolf snarls and bares his teeth at "ancient shapes" (UU 94), and birds sit on the lines, "waiting" (NC 12). But it is the fox whom Eiseley employs as metaphor for himself. "Fox masks, wolf masks, I try them on," Eiseley writes, "as if I were a savage" attempting "to see the beast in man" ("The Changelings," NOA 19). Eiseley is "cursed by these foxes and their kin to see them everywhere" (20). Of all the animals which roamed the prairie, why was it the fox with whom Eiseley so readily identified? This question is close to the heart of Eiseley's literary persona. To understand Eiseley, we need to understand the fox, his grizzled alter-ego.

The fox is a Trickster character, assuming many forms and names in myth and folklore. He is a Changeling, a Transformer, a consistent survivor. In different parts of the world, the Trickster is known as Raven, Spider, Man, or the ubiquitous Coyote. He can transform others and change himself, from human to animal, male to female, reflecting the ever-changing dynamics of the world. Trickster is a cultural hero, matching his wit against other animals, humans, and even the gods themselves, to overcome adversity. Trickster is the "exponent of all possibilities" (qtd. in Elder 191). He is a "quintessential mediator" in between the human and non-human worlds, culture and nature, Id and Superego, and past and present. (Elder 191). Trickster skirts the uneasy, transparent border of the wild, where weeds grow and animals lurk in the shadows. The Trickster is Loren Eiseley. He is no man, yet he is Every Man.

Fox as Jokester-Buffoon

In "The Fox and the Grapes," one of *Aesop's Fables*, the fox sneaks into a vineyard to steal some ripe grapes from the trellises. After making several leaps and jumps, but failing in all attempts, the fox mutters as he retreats, "Well! What does it matter! The Grapes are sour!" (James 1-2)

Many accounts of trickster shenanigans are intended to be absurd or humorous, especially when the trickster fools himself or receives a dose of his own medicine. The fox without a tail, resolving to make the best of the situation, tries to convince the rest of the foxes to follow his example (James 83-84). A myth of the Winnebago tribe of Wyoming and Nebraska tells how Coyote's arms fought each other while he was skinning a buffalo with a sharp knife. The coyote ends up with gashes in his arms and

regrets his own stupidity for allowing such a thing to happen (Saunders 45). In contemporary Peruvian legend, the fox accidentally rips his mouth open after he refuses to give the flute-like bill back to the Huaychao as promised (Bierhorst 111-112). "The Fox and the Lion" relates the story of a fox who, never having seen a lion, almost dies of fright the first time they meet. He disguises his fear the second time and is so emboldened the third time they meet that he goes up to him (James 24). The moral of the story? Familiarity breeds contempt.

Trickster stories teach the value of cooperation and subjugation of unrestrained human desire. Trickster's forbidden behavior can be enjoyed vicariously while the story reaffirms social and cultural restraints. As La Fontaine notes on the inside cover of *Aesop's Fables*:

Fables in sooth are not what they appear;
Our moralists are mice and such small deer.
We yawn at sermons, but we gladly turn
To moral tales, and so, amused, we learn.

The fox often pretends to be someone or something he is not, typically in some type of disguise. He adapts to fit any situation, but does not stay too long in any one place. In a modern Peruvian fable, the fox is an amorous young man who loves to dance, his true identity revealed when he is tricked into dancing until daylight (Bierhorst 113-114).

Sometimes the Trickster's pranks backfire, as when Br'er Rabbit is stuck to the tar or when Coyote loses his eyes because he is eager to borrow someone else's viewpoint. But often the fox has the last laugh. For example, the fox entices the goat into the well and says, "If you had half as much brains as you have beard, you would have looked before you leaped" (James 5-6).

Eiseley recognizes the fox and the coyote as tricksters who play jokes on man but who teach us about life. "The old gods are mosaics, nahuales, tricksters in all cultures, laughing at man, at themselves," he wrote in a poem entitled "The Old Ones" (NOA 36). The old ones are the foxes, eagles, and coyotes who laugh at immortal men and immortal gods. They are "laughing, laughing even while drinking blood, ever while fitting the cat's face to a man, beautiful snarling, great art expended upon a world now gone" (36). Man pretends to be immortal, but it is the animal whose mask is worn in jest who has the last laugh. Man who denies his kinship with the fox or the eagle denies his own heritage. "Sometimes we have

fallen from the stars, sometimes we have ascended through the seven caverns, sometimes the bear aided us or was our father" (NOA 36). Eiseley reminds us that while the Greeks saw men as gods, it is perception seen through fallen monuments by "starving men on hilltops" (36).

... For balance he needs to laugh,
he needs the vanished trickster behind the bush;
even if he fell from the stars, who was here to
teach him? The old ones, the old ones who knew
and laughed and shared ... (36)

The ruse of the fox is well-known among hunters who often suspect, naturalist John Burroughs observed more than a century ago, that the fox enjoys the chase as much as the hound (85). "The fox will wait for the hound, will sit down and listen, or play about, crossing and recrossing and doubling upon his track, as if enjoying a mischievous consciousness of the perplexity he would presently cause his pursuer" (85).

Foxes have keen hearing and an excellent sense of smell, relying on these two senses in locating prey. Like Eiseley, they hunt mostly at night. Their large, massive tail is distinctive, and it can easily become wet and bedraggled. This is a major nuisance for the fox, who reluctantly takes refuge. The bedraggled fox holes up in his den, pride dampened, outwitted by his own form lest he should take himself too seriously.

Eiseley's literary persona is serious and somber. His portraits in his books are black and white stark; rarely is he smiling. Behind the fox mask, the Trickster is laughing. He plays dice in the abandoned house and is bemused by the rat, another trickster character, who captures the spotlight. "He is an ironically humbling figure -- a physical figure behind the individual scientist, as Eiseley posits the invisible trickster behind the institution of science" (Pitts 280).

In "The Innocent Fox", Eiseley tells of an encounter with a lone fox pup who innocently takes a chicken bone from a pile of rubbish and shakes it at him, inviting him to play (ST 63). The little fox is wide-eyed, its two front paws placed together, head swaying back and forth. "The universe was swinging in some fantastic fashion around to present its face, and the face was so small that the universe itself was laughing" (64). Eiseley picks up a whiter bone and shakes it in his own teeth as the fox whimpers with excitement. They tumble around on the ground "for one ecstatic moment," holding the universe at bay (64). Eiseley is as one with the fox and the universe, "a child's universe, a tiny and laughing universe,"

manifested in the playfulness of the fox (64). In this essay, Eiseley tries to show us how an encounter with the wild can renew our sense of wonder. Man's presence on earth is transient and elusive; man searches for meaning, holding the universe at bay, but the universe--like the fox--is playing with him.

At the conclusion of "The Old Ones," Eiseley finds his thoughts and his body turning to animal. "In this suddenly absurd landscape I find myself laughing, laughing" (NOA 37) In the ruse of the fox, Eiseley has the last laugh.

And a fox's face,
Masked in human skin,
Something wild and sharp,
Holds its laughter in
(*"Fox Curse,"* qtd. in Carlisle 65)

Fox as Hero-Survivor

The animal trickster often embodies the qualities of a cultural hero, a creator figure who helps to form the ordered world and furthers the interests of humanity. The hero who uses his wits to overcome natural adversity. Despite himself, he is sometimes unintentionally responsible for creating something helpful to mankind, such as a part of nature like the sun.

Levi-Strauss characterizes the trickster-hero as a bricoleur, one who patches creation together through indirect or unexpected action (qtd. in Elder 191). The Rabbit, seen as a weak animal, uses his wits to outsmart the much larger Br'er Bear or the wily Br'er Fox. The fox hero in "The Fox and the Hedgehog," lies in the stream covered with horseflies, aware that if they are removed, other flies will make him bleed (James 112). In Native American mythology, Coyote helps bring out the sun through the smoke hole to the middle of the sky and Fox helps his friends Deer and Magpie to catch the sun (Elder 211). Fox borrows the tiger's terror to save himself from being killed in Chinese legend (Ma 7-12). West African Trickster tales often begin with stories about hardship in the natural world. But when the tales were retold in new contexts by Africans removed from their homelands into slavery, they were transformed by use of trickster characters such as Anansi, the Spider (Elder 195).

The animal trickster hero is often a trickster thief. The theft of fire is told and retold in one form or another in most mythologies of the world. These stories have the same theme, where a very small animal trickster outwits the more powerful, even divine, fire keeper. In the Andaman Islands of the

Indian Ocean, Kingfisher steals fire from a creator-ancestor figure called Biliku. The Ila of Zambia tell the story about the wasp bringing fire to earth from God (Saunders 45). The Fox steals fire to frighten the Eagle into returning her stolen cub (James 8).

The opposing forces of the Lion and the Fox are manifested in Shakespeare and in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, representing the struggle between chivalry and Christian mysticism on the one hand, and the scientific spirit and modernism on the other (Lewis 201-202). Machiavellianism, with its emphasis on a perfect state, was in reaction to Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, which "forced civilization to face and confront the grinning shadow of its Past" (Lewis 202). Machiavelli's prince "must be a lion, but he must also know how to play the fox" (qtd. in Bartlett 136). Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is a lonely hero with a melancholy destiny, fighting against the world of modernism. Iago in *Othello* is the small destroyer, the eternal Charlie Chaplin figure of human myth, with the gods on his side. Iago has the sling and stone against *Othello*, the Goliath. This is the battle of the lion and the fox, "the contest or the tragedy arising from the meeting of the Simpleton and the Machiavel, the Fool and the Knave" (Lewis 201-202). "A prince being thus obliged to know well how to act as beast must imitate the fox and the lion, for the lion cannot protect himself from traps and the fox cannot defend himself from wolves" (qtd. in Bartlett 136).

The opposing forces of mysticism and modernism, the Lion and the Fox, epitomize the dilemma of Eiseley's evolutionary hero, a victim of his own success. The hero "prospered and grew too large and was set upon by enemies evolving about him" (IP 16). To survive, the hero, the adaptable fox, hid in deserts and developed supersensitive ears. The fox is Odysseus, ancient hero, a wanderer who survives great odds to come home. He is someone elusive and small who can get out of things with cunning. Some actors stay on the stage, while others get pushed off the stage, out of the light and out of existence. But the play must go on. "And so at midnight... the self-proclaimed fox writes his last lines, leaving a little of his own blood upon the page. In the far distance the first muted notes issue from the huntsman's horn" (NC xiii).

The trickster fox is a bricoleur, taking unexpected action to avoid capture. Indeed, the fox is hunted because of its skill in trying to avoid capture. When it is being pursued, the fox may double back on its trail or run into water, making its scent difficult to follow. It is these behaviors which enable it to survive,

like man, in a dynamic "unexpected universe."

The fox not only holds its own, but increases in the face of the means used for its extermination (Burroughs 81). It lives throughout most of the world, in farmlands and forests, on deserts, and even in wooded areas of some cities and suburbs. The fox "has been hunted and trapped and waylaid, sought for as game and pursued in enmity, taken by fair means and by foul, and yet there seems not the slightest danger of the species becoming extinct" (Burroughs 81). Who, then, will occupy center stage in the end--fox or man? Eiseley puts his money on the fox to carry on the show.

None there be," said the voice from the jar,
"can rehearse the whole tale."

This was spoken across twenty centuries. Pass it
on,
the desert will hear you
and send the kit fox
to sniff at your footprints
plodding over
the last hill.

Time cannot be rewound, but you are
companioned--
take care to leave something small
and furry
that he may rehearse
if not the whole tale
then at least the
journey.

Take care of the kit fox,
he will be needed. (IA 98)

Fox as Mediator, Fox as Man

The fox is quintessential mediator who occupies the "in-between," crossing the borders between human and non-human worlds, human society and nature, childhood and adulthood, inner and outer reality. Eiseley believed there was a thin line which separates the animal and human world. The line is often transparent, "like an invisible wall, a line you can't see," and yet it is everywhere, "running through one's brain as well as the outside world" (NC 12).

The mediator fox hides among the flowers or "in a wheat field's tawny light" ("The Changeling," NOA 20). The artist does not see the fox to paint it, but it is there, peering "from among the flowers" (20). Eiseley is the one who sees the mediator, on cave walls and in museum collections. "Here was I cursed by these foxes and their kin the wolves to see them everywhere" (20).

In "Incident in the Zoo," Eiseley stands outside a cage of little foxes and observes with fascination their beauty. He thinks they do not belong in cages. They shudder at "the city's iron pulse" and fear "the shaking ground." But the roar of the lions touches their wild hearts and evokes a response (qtd. in Carlisle 65).

They move in memory among mint leaves.
 Their lives are bound
 To a lost land, all night their ears have captured
 No friendly sound. (qtd. in Carlisle 65)

Eiseley shows his identification with foxes in the poem above and in "The Changelings," lamenting the animals caged "in shabby local zoos" and "in boxes foul" ("The Changelings," Notes, 21). Like the fox, he has "two poised ears" and "a voice that barks" (22).

I am born of these,
 their changeling.
 Who first rocked
 my cradle
 or what wild thing left me
 upon my parents' doorstep
 is a mystery ... (22)

The poem "Coyote Country" illustrates how Eiseley's inward reality blends with his observations of the external landscape. Coyote country is a "tumbled land of scarp and butte" where neighbors are "loping shapes or tangible dust." A fox with two gray, poised ears--Eiseley himself--may momentarily appear on the landscape.

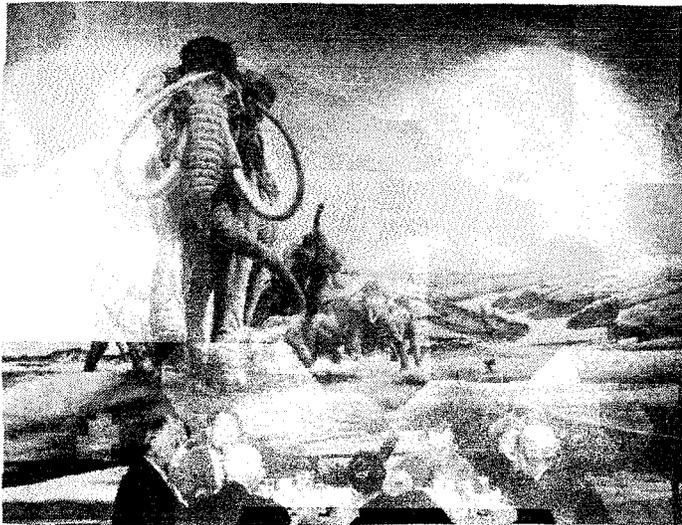
"The fox," said George Bernard Shaw, "has enthusiastic followers." The same might be said for man. He is pursued on every forest path, he is trailed backward until he is bayed like an animal into some primeval den among rocks. Or he is followed by a hound pack in full cry among some shadowy road into the dubious future. He is saint or naked ape, he is the eternal cop-out, sadist, cheat, or Samaritan. He is the face that confronts us in our morning mirror. He is nobody, like Ulysses, or Everyman as seen by John Bunyan, but first of all he is Homo sapiens, the fox. No one has really seen him, no one knows his nature because he is everyone and no one. He is man.... (LN 114)

Eiseley is the observed and the observer, the hunter and the hunted. He goes over the wall "where the broken boulders spill," hides in a dark burrow while the hunt goes by, and runs "through the leaf-strewn wood" (ST 164). He leaves fox fur on the wire as he

finds himself laughing, laughing.

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Eiseley Friends gathered in Morrill Hall for their Annual Program and Dinner. We were served in Elephant Hall where the great mural shows an ancient Platte River scene with Imperial Mammoths of some 30,000 years ago. Dignitaries present included Dr. Brian Foster, UN-L Dean of Arts and Sciences; Kira Gale, Eiseley Friends President; and Paul Gruchow, our speaker for the evening.

PAUL GRUCHOW SPEAKS TO ANNUAL PROGRAM

Our Annual Program and Dinner was held on Saturday, October 25, at Morrill Hall on the UN-L Campus. Paul Gruchow, a natural history essay writer and lecturer, spoke on "Loren Eiseley and the Meaning of Natural History," raising questions such as: "Where does the landscape end--and where do we begin?" "Is it possible to go anywhere, even into a remote wilderness, alone?" "Are wilderness and civilization opposites, or are they mirror images?" His message is of the meaning of place, humans, and the natural world. He tells us that the natural history essay in the American intellectual experience is the place where the scientist and humanist meet, saying that, "There is no better example of this than the work of Loren Eiseley."

His presentation was taped by Bill Stibor of the Nebraska Public Radio network and was then aired throughout the state on the "Connections" program. The talk has been transcribed and will be the featured presentation in our next issue of the *Caravan*.

64 people attended the dinner in Elephant Hall and around a hundred people attended the lecture which followed. Special guests for the evening were the students of the UN-L Honors Colloquium on Loren Eiseley being presented under the leadership of Dr. Bing Chen of our board.

During the afternoon, about a dozen people gathered at the Nebraska Academy of Science building (the former Bert Schultz home) to enjoy a reading of Eiseley's work by Ken Finch, director of Fontanelle Forest in Omaha and a

member of the Eiseley Friends Board. Morton Stelling, the Academy's Associate Executive Director and also a representative of the Wachiska Audubon Society, guided the group on a nature walk on the property which is being developed as a native prairie.

The event was sponsored in part by the Nebraska Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and by FirstTier Bank. We are also indebted to the Morrill Hall Gift Shop for the use of dinosaurs as centerpieces for the dinner tables.

EDWARD O. WILSON TO SPEAK FOR OCTOBER PROGRAM

Mark your calendars for October 12 for our Annual Program. In honor of the coming to the UN-L campus of Edward O. Wilson, we are joining with the Friends of the University State Museum and the Nature Conservancy to sponsor a public lecture by Dr. Wilson. A private, members-only reception for the three sponsoring organizations with Dr. Wilson will follow his lecture.

Dr. Wilson is the Pellegrino University Research Professor and Honorary Curator in Entomology at Harvard University. A Pulitzer Prize winning author, he is an ardent defender of the liberal arts, and a promoter of global conservation of species and natural ecosystems. He coined the word "Biodiversity," which has become a part of the language of understanding conservation and its importance throughout the world.

His list of publications was enhanced this year with his new work, *Consilience: the Unity of Knowledge*. He has borrowed the term "consilience" from the works of William

Whewell who in the 1840's coined it as "a jumping together of knowledge by linking facts and theory across disciplines to create a common groundwork of explanation." Thus Dr. Wilson attempts to link the sciences and humanities, an area of study which was of great interest to Dr. Eiseley.

We will be sending more information to tell of this appearance and the other activities we will be presenting earlier that afternoon.

DIMITRI BRESCHINSKY TO BE GUEST AT LITERATURE FESTIVAL

Kira Gale, in her President's Letter, tells of our participation in the Nebraska Literature Festival to be held next September 19th at Wayne State College with its theme: "World Literature in the Plains." There will be more about this in our next *Caravan*.

We are especially pleased that we will be presenting an old friend of this organization as our speaker. Dimitri Breschinsky, a Purdue University professor teaching Russian Literature, has been working over many years to translate Eiseley essays into the Russian language to make these available to the Russian people. He has often contributed to these pages to share with us his experiences doing this work. His 1994 book, *Wingbeat*, containing a dozen Eiseley essays in translation, was published in Moscow and his Eiseley translations had previously appeared in Russian journals.

In the Fall 1996 issue of the *Caravan* we reported that he was working on one more essay, "The Secret of Life" and we are pleased to tell you that this translation, from Eiseley's *The Immense Journey*, was published in the January 1998 issue of *Zvezda* (The Star), a leading literary journal from St. Petersburg, Russia.

EDITORIAL EXCAVATIONS

By Morrie Tuttle

"Time like an ever rolling stream bears all its sons away," and thus Wright Morris, Loren Eiseley's special friend, was taken from us on April 25th. This event truly represents a broken link, greatly reducing that slim number of living connections to Dr. Eiseley which remain. Both rose out of peculiarly lonely and troubled childhoods. The roots of each were sunk deep into their Nebraska origins and each revealed his strong sense of that place in his work. Three years younger than Loren, Morris came from Central City, frequently represented as "Lone Tree" in his writing.

To mark this loss, the Omaha World Herald in their editorial tribute said of him, "Morris captured feelings of hard lives . . . The novels he wrote--novels with his native Nebraska in their heart--were richly textured with abandonment, loneliness, emptiness, loss. . . he wrote about rural spaces and unsophisticated people. . ."

Eiseley and Morris did not discover each other until the 1940's when chance happened to place them into the same Philadelphia apartment house. Soon they were lost in endless conversations probing the mysteries of life. Frequently they would be off together on great hunting expeditions to strip the dusty shelves of any unsuspecting bookshop in the area, bringing their trophies home to wives who probably thought they already had enough books.

To read more of this pair, Gale Christiansen gives us a picture of their friendship in his biography, *Fox at the Wood's Edge*. Then for a detailed presentation on the literary relationship of the two, see Joseph Wydeven's paper, "Turned on the Same Lathe': Wright Morris and Loren Eiseley" which was published in the *South Dakota Review* for Spring 1995.

The achievement of Wright Morris is represented by 33 books including 19 novels, three memoirs, four books of essays, two books of short stories and five books of annotated photographs. We were lucky to find ourselves in Boston a few years back when their Museum of Fine Arts was featuring a major showing of his photography. Though we thought we knew this work very well, we were simply unprepared for how extensive this show could be and were thrilled to experience the stark reality of rural Nebraska displayed in this sophisticated eastern urban setting.

A Morris story, "The Origin of Sadness," is an obvious posthumous tribute to his friend for the protagonist could not have been based on anyone else but Loren Eiseley. This story can be found in *Collected Stories 1948-1986* by Wright Morris published by David R. Godine, Boston, 1989.

Morris was 88 and died in Mill Valley, California. He is survived by his wife Josephine. His death marks the last among the group of six Nebraska Authors which also includes, Aldrich, Cather, Eiseley, Niehardt and Sandoz, who are celebrated as the principal literary figures to have come from our state.

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Plains Song Review, a new undergraduate interdisciplinary literary journal, will soon be forthcoming from the University of Nebraska - Lincoln's College of Arts and Sciences. The initial idea and planning for this project grows out of the efforts of many people among whom several Eiseley Friends Board members have been very active. The initial thinking was generated from a desire for UN-L undergraduates to explore and be a part of the literary culture of the state. Meetings with Arts and Sciences Dean Brian Foster and Assistant Dean Laura White produced a plan for a magazine to publish material written by undergraduates which will probe "Nebraska's sense of place" and be a forum for UN-L undergraduates to explore and be a part of the literary culture of Nebraska. The title *Plains Song Review* was selected because it echoes

the title of a novel by Wright Morris and the allusion to "song" also invokes Walt Whitman's poem, "Song of Myself." The Consulting Editor will be Laura Lacy who is a former curator of the Heritage Room. The Advisory Board will include Kira Gale and Morrie Tuttle.

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We have written previously about the project to place a life scale bronze Imperial Mammoth sculpture in front of the State Museum on the UN-L campus. This effort which has been in progress for a seemingly endless period of time is finally going to be realized this summer. Word has just been received that the foundry in Wyoming is now completing their work. The huge sculpture will be transported on a specially modified fifth wheel trailer and will be leaving there at the end of June and it is expected to visit sites in Nebraska before it arrives here for placement. Work is now in progress in front of the building to prepare the site.

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An exciting new exhibit, "Charles Darwin: A Life of Discovery", opened this past February at the University of Nebraska State Museum where it will remain over the next year. The exhibit celebrates this central figure in natural history, whose work has influenced either directly or indirectly all branches of natural science. The basic exhibit was developed at the College of Mount St. Joseph in Cincinnati by Gene Kritsky of their faculty. The travelling exhibit, as it is shown here, has been greatly enhanced by the addition of a series of display cases showing the relationship between work being done at the museum and Darwin's writings. Each of the museum's curatorial divisions contributed to this.

The exhibit came here after showing at Down House, Darwin's home set on 36 acres of England's Kentish countryside some 16 miles from London. The property has been undergoing renovation and the house was recently closed for a time. But two months after the exhibit opened here, the home reopened to the public. There has been much written about this event in English periodicals telling of the exciting improvements and interest there has been considerable. They are expecting 20,000 visitors this year.

Darwin bought the property in 1842 where he resided until his death in 1882. Once his wife was gone, it was sold and for a time operated as a girl's school. It was restored to the nation by the philanthropic surgeon, Sir George Buckstone Browne, who bought the property in 1927. Even so the 16 room building continued its decline becoming just a little known musty museum. In 1993 the property was taken over by the Natural History Museum which initiated significant fund raising for preservation. In 1996, English Heritage with the help of major gifts and funds from the national lottery was able to acquire the property and since then the transformation has been very rapid. Before their work began about all that one could see was his study and

some rooms with dusty displays in glass cases. Now there is a handsome full restoration of the ground floor and while work on the house is essentially complete, they continue restoring the grounds and gardens.

Over an intense 18 month period they conducted interviews with Darwin descendants, scoured his letters and papers and did everything else possible to seek information about the house, and the use and layout of his garden areas. Very little remained of the original decor and furnishings and the house was generally in a bad state. The layers in paint scrapings were microscopically analyzed to determine the sequence of interior decoration. Old photographs of the interior taken by Darwin's son were digitally enhanced and scanned by computer to determine patterns in wallpapers. The living room drapes were studied from a faint image seen in a mirror in a fading photograph. Thus this restoration has been faithful in every possible detail to show the house as it would have been around 1876 near the end of his life.

Julius Bryant, Director of Collections for English Heritage, says "this was his nest." Telling that most of their properties are shown because of architectural significance, Bryant said, "this is English Heritage's first 'personality' house where the collection is more important than the building." Their aim is "to present it as if Darwin were still here." An eight room state-of-the-art, hands-on exhibit was located in the upstairs rooms so that the illusion of how the large family lived in the main portion of the house would not be disturbed.

Despite a large family of active children who also used the whole place, every part of the house was nevertheless his working laboratory. He dissected pigeons on the billiard table and used the piano to test the hearing of worms and his gardens to study variations of plant species. The house is jam-packed with books, collections, specimen jars and general scatter.

One can see where he worked. Here is the elbow worn arm chair where he wrote on a board in his lap or just rested in deep thought. There is a little mirror carefully placed so that from his study window he could first view visitors waiting at the door before deciding if he was at home that day. And just as he did each day, one can pass along the quarter mile sand walk loop, winding under trees he planted to follow his "thinking path."

In his youth he had considered a religious vocation and yet later he would hold off the publication of his theory of evolution for twenty years partly because he feared its religious consequences. But by the time of his death, Darwin had lost his faith. There would seem to be a certain irony, one which would not have been lost on him, that his home was reopened this past Good Friday.