



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Nature's Cry to the Wandering Man- An Analysis of Loren Eiseley's Select Themes.

Dr. Harsha M. Pandiya

Assistant Professor of English

Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore

Abstract:

Nature is the Sacred Center which mothers the whole universe. Modern Man, in his modern futile frenzy of development and progress, has estranged himself from his Mother. He has forgotten that all the human and non-human life forms have their own intrinsic value irrespective of their utilitarian significance to human beings. During these times when man believes himself at the pivot of God's perfect creation and all other things are invariably created for his use, Nature writers like Loren Eiseley have severed this stereotype attitude by reminding man of his need to return home to Nature and lead a responsible role of protecting the life on this planet and contributing towards a peace-filled and harmonious living in communion with our sacred center. Acknowledged as one of the most important twentieth-century American nature writers, Loren Eiseley was a widely admired practitioner of creative nonfiction, a genre that, has flourished in recent decades. General readers cite Eiseley as an inspiration and model for having produced eloquent, complex, and informative essays on various issues relating to environment, evolution of life forms and Man's responsible role in the phenomenon called the Green World. This Research Paper studies Loren Eiseley's insistence on a peaceful and a collaborative ecological life style as well as his perspective of according equal respect to all the non-human forms especially the birds and animals reiterating their indispensability in the sustenance of the Earth and the universe. The Paper also illustrates how Eiseley, being a scientist with a difference, condemns the exploitation of animals for various purposes and the impact of modern technology on earthly life and reiterates a more compassionate and a respectful approach in treating them.

Keywords: Loren Eiseley, humanity, animality, becoming-animal, anthropocentrism, Nature, spirituality

Introduction:

“It is nature's cry to homeless, far-wandering, insatiable man: "Do not forget your brethren, nor the green wood from which you sprang. To do so is to invite disaster.” (Loren Eiseley)

An exceptional 20th Century American scientist who has been also variously titled as archaeologist, anthropologist, educator, philosopher, and natural science writer, Loren Eiseley devoted his life to his writings that ranged from scientific articles to poetry. His works present ground-breaking reflections about the relationships between humans and Nature and more-than-humans. Eiseley develops an environmental ethics toward nature and its other-than-human inhabitants based on his perception of humanity's potential for violence and kindness. This leads to his questioning of man's kinship with other species. Eiseley sees the cruelty of the natural world in his records of the deaths of animals and the unnatural violence to other life forms caused by humans. As a philosophical poet and a Deep Ecologist in the terminology of Arne Naess, he meditates on the necessity for sympathy for all living things.

Giving Voice to Nature:

A scientist who criticized the scientific practices of his contemporaries, Loren Eiseley challenges the views of science, nature, and man that were current at the time he wrote. Rather than accepting the doxa of modern mechanical science, he uses his knowledge as an archeologist as well as his personal experience to find new angles from which to view the universe and *homo sapiens'* place within it. He argues that modern man has fallen out of nature and become a planet destroyer who causes the death and extinction of non-human forms of life. In this he anticipates the eco-centric position that is becoming necessary in the era following the Industrial Revolution that is increasingly being recognized as Man-centred. Eiseley's writings urge that humanity reconnect with our animal past in order to respect the natural world from which we came. His work forces readers to participate in his project of re-examining our own mental and cultural world.

Loren Eiseley spoke of his scientific profession humbly as that of “a bone hunter,” yet his writings described his field discoveries with poetic language and they opened philosophical reflections on humans and nature. He believed man has fallen out of nature, and that he now destroys the green world that man as animal depends on but which he has forgotten.

In its forward march science tries to exert control not only over the earth but also all the other planets; modern scientists explore outer-space as if they could conquer the void: “This effort has become the primary obsession of the great continental powers. Into the organization of this endeavor has gone an outpouring of wealth and inventive genius so vast that it constitutes a public sacrifice equivalent in terms of relative wealth to the building of the Great Pyramid at Giza almost five thousand years ago. Indeed, there is a sense in which modern science is involved in the construction of just such a pyramid, though an invisible one” (IP 87). Eiseley criticizes the American space program because he believes it sacrifices too much for too little, and exists simply to prove humans’ power. Like the dead pharaohs of Egypt, modern men construct costly though invisible monuments to demonstrate their mastery. He repeatedly argues that his age’s outer space explorations are unreasonable while there are more urgent problems on earth waiting to be solved. He dislikes the fact that “billions of dollars were being devoured in the space effort, while at the same time an affluent civilization was consuming its resources at an ever-increasing rate” (IP 69). With their reliance on new technologies modern men have become, in Eiseley’s words, “the world eaters.” Eiseley points out the “space leap”—the space exploration—is a product of man’s brain, based on which he builds up his second world : “The whole invisible pyramid is itself the incidental product of a primitive seed capsule, the human brain” (IP 93).

Eiseley finds the modern scientist is very anxious to conquer the natural world, including the things he doesn’t fully see or understand. Such men have forgotten their lost animal environment, and ignore their responsibilities as individuals, to their brotherhood—animals—and to the place where they come from—Earth. Eiseley fears that the power harnessed by scientific inventions in modern technology has created an unnatural relationship between human beings and the natural world. The most urgent disaster is the disappearance of wildlife, as their living environment becomes violently transformed by humans.

Eiseley criticizes the fact that men have modified the environment too quickly and too violently for other forms of life to find their place in it. Revealing the harsh living environment for wildlife in man-made world, Eiseley urges modern man to look at the ecological problem and search for solutions in forging an ethical relation to place. Man's loss of the green world and the past has brought on a loss of habitats for animals and plants; Eiseley finds that the solution lies in affirming an attachment to place. Eiseley urges modern men to follow the example of the indigenous peoples and to re-enter nature, retaining their former awe for the unknown in life and time. Maybe by achieving this perspective modern men can gain a new and different attitude toward their environment and their relation to other life forms. The green world holds the keys to the biodiversity of life within it. As only one element of the biosphere, albeit a decisive one in the Anthropocene era, man should respect nature's power.

Thus to conclude with Eiseley's quote, "If I remember the sunflower forest it is because from its hidden reaches man arose. The green world is his sacred center. In moments of sanity he must still seek refuge there." (IP, 8)

References:

1. Eiseley, Loren C. *The Firmament of Time*. Lincoln, Neb. : U of Nebraska, 1999. Print.
2. ---. *Francis Bacon and the Modern Dilemma*. Lincoln : U of Nebraska, 1962.
3. ---. *The Invisible Pyramid : A Humanist Account of the Space Age*. London : Rupert Hart-Davis, 1971.
4. ---. *The Lost Notebooks of Loren Eiseley*. Ed. Kenneth Heuer. Boston : Little, Brown, 1987.
5. ---. *The Unexpected Universe*. New York : Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969.
6. ---. *The Immense Journey*, New York: Random House, 1957.
7. Lavery, David, *Faith in the Distance: Loren Eiseley and the Evolutionary Imagination*, Alabama: University of Alabama, 1986.