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Sec 303

Exercise 2.4

1. When Cronon repeatedly returns to the use of the word “we” while writing his essay, “The Trouble with Wilderness”, he does so in order to serve the rhetorical function of including himself in with the audience, and to put some of the blame causing his project to fall on himself as well. With the use of the word “we” while addressing the audience, he confirms that he is talking to all of humanity, himself included, to show that everyone seems to view wilderness in the way that he is describing. Furthermore, with the use of phrases like “each of us” and “many of us” (Cronon 8), he cements the fact that he is trying to be as inclusive as possible and talk to the audience as one. As far as persuading the reader of his claims, his method is very effective. By including himself in the “scolding” that he is issuing to the audience, he is able to escape the view of him as pretentious, and endear himself to the audience. This can contribute to the tension in the essay that Cronon’s use of “we” serves to unify humans, and further separate us from nature and wilderness. By referring to the audience as “we”, Cronon gives off a calming effect and does not give a sense of urgency to his argument. This inclusive tone fails to give the audience a motivation to change by avoiding ultimatum and bordering on a commentary of Cronon’s intellectual problem. After reading Hinton’s essay “Mountain Home”, my view on these questions does change slightly. Hinton’s view on the power of language and the inclusion of everyone in what is known as the “being” and “nonbeing” breathes new meaning into what is meant by Cronon’s use of “we” so frequently. If all of nature is known as the “being”, then perhaps Cronon is including nature in his address of the audience, and he is pleading with both humans and nature, which he views as one being, to change the current stigma of “untouched wilderness”.

2. Cronon and Hinton would have a view on “wilderness” that is similar, but with several distinct differences and ideas. Cronon believes that humanity’s view of nature as a savior, and separate entity from our lives is dangerous and paradoxical, due to the fact that there is no such thing a nature that is totally untouched by humans and that this view causes us to live without the responsibility of our use of nature. Hinton, on the other hand, shares the belief that humans and nature are connected, but he derives an even deeper connection from the Chinese ideas of “being” and “nonbeing”, that humans are a part of nature and wilderness in all aspects. Even Cronon recognizes a small difference between the two, evident from his words of appreciation of the “tree in the backyard” or the “lake or pond”, even if he would not like to admit it, but Hinton supports a total union of the two subjects. Keywords like “cosmos” and “wilderness” could be used to create a tight conversation between the two subjects.