

Environmental History Discussion Questions by Anya Zilberstein

Since its inception in the 1970s-80s, most environmental historians in the U.S. have focused on modern environmentalism, resource conservation, and recreation (especially in federal lands like national parks). Do you see these concerns reflected in *Changes in the Land*? Why or why not?

What is the narrative arc of environmental change in *Changes in the Land* and what might it tell you about Cronon's implicit argument, preoccupations, or political views? Why do you think he ends the book in the late eighteenth century?

What does Cronon mean by his statement that human communities are "inside nature"?

You've already looked at Braudelian approaches to history over the long term as well as the use of archeology and material evidence, including data produced by historical scientists (geologists, historical meteorologists, dendrochronologists, etc.). Now that you've encountered these methodological approaches again in Cronon's work, what strikes you as the same or different, especially with reference to Part I of his book?

One of the methodological and theoretical opportunities of environmental history is to rethink or propose alternative geographical and temporal scales for historical analysis. Is this kind of revisionism in evidence in the works you read for this week—why or why not?

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21H.991 Theories and Methods in the Study of History
Fall 2014

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