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Sanders Rhetorical Analysis

America originated with a group of migrants crossing the crushing waves of the Atlantic in search of a fresh start. They continued to migrate exploring the expansive west in search of resources and a place to call home. As they migrated west forests were cut down and native culture suppressed; the land was vulnerable and the migrant explorers exploited its environment. In this excerpt from *Settling Down*, Sanders critiques Americans' childish understanding of migration, arguing that man's want to move on, rather than embracing the land and putting down roots, destroys the environment and culture of the regions he inhabits.

Sanders opens (paragraph 1) with a depiction of man's mythological and childish interpretation of migration. He begins with a recollection of our nation's historical migrants; using asyndeton, he starts with "sailors, explorers" and progresses to farfetched examples of "rainbow-chasers, vagabonds of every stripe." Sanders indicates the idea that our migration began with justified exploration, but has since then shifted to senseless and childlike wandering; he builds on this idea of childish immaturity, when he refers to Americans as "restless movers" and their "romance of unlimited space" which both imply childish characteristics. Sanders incorporates a Biblical reference with the idea that "Our Promised Land" remains "over the next ridge" and "at the end of the trail," but "never under our feet"; his reference here comes with irony, as American's will never find their Promised Land because they refuse to settle down, build a community, and take care of the land. Sanders directly addresses Americans' tendencies to expel the resources of an area by including examples such as "we fish out a stream" and "wear out a field," then "we go off to a new stream" or a "fresh field." Sanders implies that after man destroys, he never looks back at what he has done or could have done to preserve that environment. Sanders refers to ideas of America's "national mythology," implying that their "worst fate" is getting "trapped" in "a village" or "some dead-end job"; he critiques these ideas, arguing that there is no factual evidence to support them. Sanders continues this critique with the argument that

these ideas have made American's believe "Stand still... and you die"; their only hope is to keep moving and never let their roots grow too deep. Sanders's tone shifts, with the use of accusatory language, when he moves on and states Americans have "built the most roads" and the president intends to "triple it [the interstates] in size." Sanders states that as Americans continue to be "infatuated with the myth of the open road," they become "a populace drunk on driving," implying that Americans' senses and their ability to make decisions have been impaired; once again, addressing America's narrow sighted interpretation of migration.

Next, Sanders furthers his argument (paragraphs 2-3) against migration, attacking Rushdie's argument and his inability to acknowledge migration's power to destroy land and culture. Throughout these paragraphs, Sanders's tone is biting and sardonic as he uses prolepsis to address the flaws of Rushdie's argument to both strengthen the claims and ethos of his argument. Rushdie argues for migration and its ability to blend culture and ideas. Sanders responds with the bitter claim that everything about Americans is "mongrel" and they "are stronger for it"; he indicates that this mixing is filthy and faulty, but Americans still view themselves as the strongest and most advanced society. Rushdie argues that only migrants can be free from nationalism; Sanders refutes this argument by stating that yes American's could do with less "nationalism... racism, religious sectarianism, or class snobbery," but America's "history of migration" has not "immunize" it from "bigotry." The sardonic tone of Sanders critique gives the impression that he feels the topic is obvious, but must be addressed due to American ignorance. Sanders moves on to address the destruction of land and resources as a result of the idea that people "root themselves in ideas rather than places." Rushdie argues that migrants must become "imaginative" with their new surroundings; Sanders claims that there is no use of imagination, but rather migrants simply pack up their "visions and values" in addition to their "baggage and carry them along." Sanders is highlighting the fact that Americans have done what they fear most, they are trapped, stuck in their own ideas of what they can do for an area, rather than what the area can do for them. Sanders builds the logos of this argument with specific examples: "Spaniards devastated" the life and culture of the "New World" with "smallpox" and "rats" in addition to the "religion, economics, and politics of the Old World," and the "Dust Bowl" the result of farming

methods from wetter regions “transferred” to the Great Plains. With these examples, Sanders proves that all migration is not the glorious necessity Rushdie claims, but instead it is Americans’ idea of migration that becomes a danger to the land and culture of untouched regions. Sanders then completes this argument with a powerful metaphor of the American “mind as a cookiecutter” and the land he imprints on the “dough”; he once again alludes to the idea that Americans have childlike actions when it comes to migration.

Finally, Sanders closes his argument (paragraph 4) with a call upon the American people to settle down and build a healthy community for future generations. Sanders opens with the use of antithese to explain the base of Rushdie's argument; he uses a balance juxtaposition of “uprooting brings tolerance” and “rootedness breeds intolerance,” his idea that Americans prefer “imaginary homelands” rather than “geographical ones” illustrates again the childish nature of Americans’ interpretations of migration. Sanders addresses the fact that migration is “inevitable,” but it can occur without “disastrous” effects on “the earth or ourselves.” In order to do this, he states Americans must “root themselves in places” and will then know to “care for those places”; he implies the creation of a symbiotic relationship between man and the land. Sanders gives Americans an alternative course of action in which they will “become inhabitants” and no longer migrants, with hopes they will embrace his ideas. Sanders’s tone becomes hopeful as he states, with the use of anaphora, what will become if his ideas are played out; he feels by settling down, Americans can build a “home for ourselves,” the creatures we live around, “and our descendants.” Sanders’ ture argument develops here as he calls upon the American people, to show them he believes they have the ability to break free from their childish mindset and grow into the land they occupy to build a future.

America was claimed by migrants; they exploited the land as they moved west. The American interpretation of migration has been childish and trivial from the beginning seeing the land for its resources not as a home. Sanders believes that if Americans can “root themselves in places” rather than ideas, Americans can build a sustainable community for generations to come.