

Symposium on Wildness, Wilderness and the Creative Imagination
(2/20-22/05 – Iowa State University)

3. The Artist as Outlaw

(Panel presentation and discussion with audience)

John Monroe (ISU history) + Paul Griffiths (ISU history) + Teresa Paschke (ISU design)

- Review of asceticism (practice of extreme self denial) and Nietzsche (German philosopher: Christianity's emphasis on afterlife makes its believers less able to cope with earthly life)

- 20th century creative wildness is best embodied in improvisation

- Review of England 1500-1600s: being able to write meant having power

- Industrial age brought time as a discipline

- Shift from artist as dependent on patronage of nobility to artist as needing to please and sell to middle class – consumer revolution

- writer as political force for greater good

- artist as visionary – has to act and give voice to what others don't want to see; this is what marginalizes the artist who says the emperor has no clothes

- what makes you go 'ahhhh' when seeing a Monet waterlily, but not when seeing a portrait of napoleon or some other noble patron?

- historians teach people how to study change

- ultimate goal of bohemian lifestyle is to blend art and life together as one; but art only has the power to critique society if it is on the margin

- what does it mean to be living outside of society's norms? Psychologically outside? Physically outside? (example of college kids and their lifestyle stereotype; accepted by society for that age/place but not after/elsewhere)

- Whatever creative act you choose requires a passion.... Yes all can learn to draw, write, paint, etc. but not all have the passion to use/do

- Artists tend to see the world in metaphoric terms so it can be difficult to relate to the general public; artists also work in isolation and need that isolation which makes others suspicious of them

- Beauty is morally neutral – can't assume that beautiful is good; that would mean shutting off your critical thinking skills
- Kids who do well in /are interested in English/art/history are almost sure to be left behind in current education system
- How does society place a value on art? Is it a commodity? Hard for artists to put a price on their creative results; art is a form of expression and usually produced as a result of something non-economic
- Chefs have become artists not just artisans
- Bottom line: what are you creating for? Dollars? Or self?