

Wilderness notes, August 2017 -

There's this call to the formless that only clay provides. The problem, then, is expanded context: how to exist in civilization.

It's not so much a definition of what wilderness is, but rather what humans think it is. The concept of wilderness only exists in response to civilization. Wilderness is what civilization is not. It is a negative space and a void rather than an objective sense. Everything that is not concretely understood (comprehensible) is wild.

Paradise = no extra variables to worry about.

"Safety, happiness, and progress all seemed dependent on rising out of a wilderness situation"

Fantastic creatures lurk in the depths of the forest. Deity or devil, wilderness equates to fear and lack of control.

Pan, the green man, influenced the creation of the word "panic".

Adam and Eve were simply relieved of their responsibility to work in order to survive – this is paradise.

Wilderness is a symbol of anarchy.

Romantics viewed wilderness as sublime through the lens of the privilege of civilization – the first group of modern humans to do so

Appreciation of everything wild begins in/in response to organized life

Vast, chaotic scenery seen as sublime/idealized only happens when you don't have to permanently exist there

By the 1790s, wilderness was a novelty: The pleasure of suffering/the novelty of danger. I like to think of modernism as a "last 100 years thing" and anything before that was nothing but trees and bears and pioneer spirit, but it was not so

An exciting and temporary alternative to real life

Sublime and picturesque as adjectives applied so liberally so as to lose meaning

Constant existential crisis is an American asset (because it keeps everyone motivated)

The line between the sublime and genuine terror is thin

In wilderness is the preservation of the world

In 1837, Thoreau spoke of the commercial spirit as a virus infecting his age

The whole of nature is a metaphor for the human mind

For many, just knowing the wilderness existed was immensely important (enough?)