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MONT 106N

Problem Set 2 Essay

Holy Cross: A “Natural” Campus

A first impression of the College of the Holy Cross campus usually involves the words “classic” or “green” (during the spring, summer, or early fall). Fr. Kuzniewski's talk focused on the “classic” architectural aspect of the campus and the walking tour provided a closer look at the meaning behind all the nature surrounding the college. The definition of the natural world is a world in which nature remains uninterrupted and free. Nature can be interfered with to coexist with human life, but not altered in pattern or season. A natural space would be defined as an area in which nature is alive and flourishing even in the presence of human activity. Holy Cross coincides with both definitions and is a natural space that is connected to the natural world.

Fr. Kuzniewski stated how the buildings constructed on campus were positioned in accommodation with the natural surroundings. For example, the central building of Fenwick is placed roughly in the middle of the campus facing north. This provides an artistic focal point for the rest of the

*This begs a question: Didn’t humans establish the meanings of the memorial trees in the arboretum? Couldn’t the nature surrounding the campus have other meanings too that we did not impose?*

*It seems to me that much human interference with nature gives little attention to coexistence, just to the needs of people.*

*What about spaces with little or no ongoing human activity?*

surrounding buildings and landscape. Most of the rest of the buildings were built into the hill and constructed in the shape of an “I” perpendicular to the hill. This provided for better view of the sun and other natural beauties.

College of the Holy Cross is in fact an arboretum. There are numerous trees planted around campus, many of which have been dedicated to graduated classes or important historical figures related to the college. The trees not only represent special people but provide a relaxing, natural atmosphere for students. The setting of being in an “outdoors” like place keeps the stress level of a studious environment under control. By providing a green environment, Holy Cross connects students with the natural world and shows respect to the force of nature that has always been present.

*Amanda,*

*You write well and clearly. In terms of what you are saying, it seems that you are thinking of nature almost entirely in relation to human beings. That is natural enough, I guess. But I think there is a difference between natural for human purposes (like the trees in our arboretum) and nature “for its own sake.” Think about that as you look around the campus.*

*The question I have with what you are saying here is basically that there is very little in a natural forest, for instance, that is as manicured as our campus. Our arboretum trees are memorials to people connected with the college so we highlight them for our own contemplation. Trees in a natural forest have to compete with each other and with undergrowth for space and sunlight. Isn’t that very different?*

*“outdoors-like” needs a hyphen*