Greg Monfette

9/25/09

Identifying patterns

Holy Cross in the Natural World

The College of the Holy Cross campus is arguablely one of the most visually appealing in the country. Holy Cross, though, has many quarks that separate it from the rest. But what makes Holy Cross truly unique is its connection with the natural world and the architectural styling’s that make it what it is today.

Holy Cross not only connects with the natural world as a whole, but, also, seems to have its own little natural world. We must first start by looking at the land that Holy Cross was built on. The incredibly hilly land is far from ideal for building on. Yet the architects who designed Holy Cross found a way to incorporate the college into the hills. Some buildings actually cut into hills, while others lay on land that had to be leveled before construction began.

The land layout of Holy Cross is but one thing that connects it to the natural world. Holy Cross is a registered

*spelling is arguably*

*This is the wrong word. I think you mean quirks; “distinctive features” would be better.*

*no apostrophe here – not a possessive*

*Don’t overuse this word – say something like “extremely” or “very”*

“*layout” is sufficient; maybe say “physical layout” if you want to make it completely clear.*

arboretum. The trees that populate the campus not only add a warm and inviting feeling to the campus, but, also, contribute to the history of the college. Each tree tells a story. It is an amazing feeling to walk to class with such history around every corner.

In my opinion a natural world or area is a space that connects with the rest of the world and its people. Holy Cross is a prime example. An example could be that during the Second World War Holy Cross served as a cadet training school for the Navy. It produced pupils who went out to fight for the freedom of those around the world. Another example is the Jesuit affiliation that connects us with others from around the world. These are just two of the many aspects of Holy Cross that connect this exquisite college with the natural world as a whole.

When I came to Holy Cross the buildings that made up the campus really caught my eye. I visited several other campuses and many of them seemed to be concrete playgrounds. Every building was big, plain, and not appealing

*There is a distinction here that you do not seem to be making. Trees are certainly present in “natural landscapes.” But haven’t they been put in a different context here? They serve as memorials to people associated to the college in the campus arboretum. So each one is highlighted and effectively put on a pedestal for us to contemplate. Isn’t that different from a “natural” forest where the trees are just living things living for their own sakes?*

*Along the same lines as the previous comment – aren’t these human connections? Do they have anything to do with nature other than human beings?*

to the eye at all. This is not an atmosphere that a prospective student would find appealing. Holy Cross offers a more sophisticated campus. It reminds me of the campuses of the Ivy League schools. The buildings are made of brick, covered with ivy, and are well arranged. They are not one on top of the other, leaving no room for exceptional landscaping. I believe that the architects who designed Holy Cross may have been going for that Ivy League look. They wanted a classy building set up that was also functional. They did this perfectly. It seems like you can host a major event in every building it seems. Some buildings have massive, artistically designed columns in the front for support. Others are fully clad in brick and ivy. One of the more modern buildings, Smith Labs, is made of thousands of panels of glass. At times I will simply stand in awe at the unbelievable architecture that surrounds me. But what amazes me the most at times is how the architects of Holy Cross were able to pull off these incredible buildings on such hilly land. It took extreme amounts of planning and creativity to make Holy Cross what it is today.

Holy Cross seems to roll with the punches like no other institution. When the state wanted to build a highway

*These underlined phrases seem a little informal to me. It would be better to avoid things like this in formal writing. Say something like “aiming for,” “classy look.”*

*another overstated and lazy way of saying things -- avoid this – say something like “impressive”*

*Isn’t that story just an illustration that HC has political influence?*

through the campus, Holy Cross resisted, in order to prevent them from destroying the Holy Cross natural world. When they were dealt the terrible land on the hill, they took it and made it one of the most visually appealing campuses in the country. The Holy Cross Natural Space is one of the most unique in the nation and strongly contributes to the overall natural world.

*Greg, this is a good essay. You write well, although you sometimes slip into ways of saying things that would be fine in everyday speech but are less appropriate for formal writing. The major comment I have here is the one I raised before – you do not seem to be distinguishing the “natural” and the purely human context of the HC campus. Or don’t you see a distinction? To me, there is a major difference. Trees in natural forests, for instance, look a lot different from the trees here. They have to compete for space and sunlight with other trees and undergrowth, and so forth. To me nothing in the natural world looks quite as manicured as our campus.*