Tom Santa Maria

Reactions to Zetterstrom Talk

When I was informed in the Wheeler basement that one of the requirements of my Montserrat class would be to attend various lectures, part of me said, “well, they *could* be interesting.” The other said, “great, something more to do.” When I was told the first of these would be a quasi mandatory talk on trees, or even worse - about pictures of trees; I was flat out disappointed. Yes, I know, trees are important. Yes, I know, they give us the air we breathe, essentially giving us life, but who wants to hear about that old reaction summarized by 6CO2 +6H2O yields C6H12O6. This seemed a little “freshman biology” to me. Despite my attitude, though I can absolutely and honestly say that I did not emerge from Seelos Theater a changed man, one message of Zetterstrom’s lecture did speak to me: trees, are beautiful.

 Two things were made obvious to me, the first of which was that humans have developed a habit of tearing down a lot of the earth’s natural aesthetic beauty. The second though similar is that trees are indeed beautiful and majestic. (Oh, also we should plant some trees in the Hart Center parking lot.) When Zetterstrom showed some of the pictures from the Holy Cross campus of the 1920’s it was evident that not only was the school an arboretum, but there was a true respect for the earth since these trees were not just planted but well taken care of. A great example of this would be the old orchard from which there is shamefully only one tree remaining.

 Recalling that day in Wheeler basement when one of the Natural World Cluster professors asked, “Is Holy Cross beautiful and does this matter?” in supplementation with Zetterstrom I thought of my first experience with the Holy Cross campus. I remember driving up Linden Lane with my parents and saying, “God, this is beautiful. This is where I want to go.” In fact I described that experience to one of the admissions officers just moments later, praying that she saw my desire to attend the college. Little did I understand that the trees were the great motive force of these sentiments. I only discovered this when I left Seelos theater that night, and glanced up at them, while they gazed down at me during their ever vigilant guard of the campus.