Johns interprets Homer’s art; gains clues into his life

BY MOLLY BOBEK CRUSADER NEWS STAFF

Last Tuesday, at 7:30 p.m., in the Center for Religion, Ethics, and Culture’s Rehm Library, Professor Elizabeth Johns gave a well researched and equally well-received lecture entitled, “The Nature of Observation.” The lecture was described by Nicole Royer ’04 as “an incredible stimulating and enjoyable discussion, giving new insight and appreciation into the life and work of an incredible artist.” In the lecture, Johns presented her views on Winslow Homer, known as one of the greatest American artists of the 19th century, through the lenses of developmental psychologists Erik Erikson and Daniel Levinson.

A fellow at the College and affiliated with Center for Religion, Ethics, and Culture, Johns’ credentials are numerous, including an impressive resume that boasts four books published on Homer. She still “holds fast” to her beliefs about Homer by examining the works he produced, and comparing his paintings with the parallel events and circumstances in his life. Johns looked at the process of doing so as an exercise of uncovering “Who is this person?” and looking to art as a concrete source of information about the artist. Though many artists, including Homer, may have been private and personal individuals, their art can serve as a record of their interior journey through life, reflecting their anxieties, ideals, and hopes. To better interpret this record, Johns suggested using theories proposed by Erikson, and expanded on by Levinson. These psychologists viewed life as being divided into stages of development, and that there are specific goals, occurrences, and feelings that accompany each stage. The hypothesis is, therefore, that by looking at the dates and circumstances surrounding the creation of each of Winslow Homer’s paintings, we can gain a more complete understanding of what he was thinking and feeling during certain stages of his life.

Johns undertook this task in her lecture by outlining Homer’s life, and showing concurrent slides of his paintings. For example, in his mid-twenties, Homer was faced with the outbreak of the Civil War, and his paintings trace how his response to such unexpected events led him to make key changes in his personal and artistic life. Johns suggested that through the creation of his paintings, one can understand his very interior journey through life, reflecting their anxieties, ideals, and hopes. To better interpret this record, Johns suggested using theories proposed by Erikson, and expanded on by Levinson. These psychologists viewed life as being divided into stages of development, and that there are specific goals, occurrences, and feelings that accompany each stage. The hypothesis is, therefore, that by looking at the dates and circumstances surrounding the creation of each of Winslow Homer’s paintings, we can gain a more complete understanding of what he was thinking and feeling during certain stages of his life.

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Parents and students strike it lucky at Family Weekend

BY JUSTIN REIDY CRUSADER NEWS STAFF

Last weekend, Holy Cross hosted its annual Family Weekend, which has been a continued tradition at the College for 48 years. During this weekend, the College offers many exciting events for students and their families to attend together and allows students a chance to show their families their home away from home. The weekend’s events are planned by the College’s Purple Key Board and the Bishop Healy Multicultural Society. The weekend was a great success, and the College provided many of its visitors with a wonderful and memorable experience.

The weekend’s events started with a gala concert on Friday night, performed in St. Joseph’s Chapel by the College Choir and orchestra. The concert featured songs by Rodgers and Hammerstein, including excerpts from “ Oklahoma!,” “Carousel,” “South Pacific,” and “The Sound of Music.” The concert was particularly fierce on the last few

Learning about diversity from MTV’s “Real World”

BY KARA JACKMAN CRUSADER NEWS STAFF

Last Wednesday, two cast members from MTV’s “The Real World,” Dan Renzi, from the Miami cast, and Julie Stoffer, from the New Orleans cast, visited the Hogan Ballroom stage, Stoffer and Renzi answered the audience’s questions, spoke about their experiences living on film, and addressed such issues as adjusting to life in a house filled with “people from all walks of life,” as Renzi puts it, and dealing with the more personal issues of sexual orientation. Sponsored by Allies, the Association for Bisexuals, Lesbians, and Gays at Holy Cross (ABoGLa), and the Office of Multicultural Education, the event was one of many scheduled to commemorate Rainbow Alliance Week, a series of events aimed at educating the Holy Cross community about raising awareness of, and taking pride in, diversity.

Renzi, a homosexual male, emphasized that The Real World has provided a forum for life’s larger issues, especially homosexuality, since it has become a fixture on MTV at the series’ inception in 1991. He remarked that gay and lesbian individuals want “to get to the middle ground, to blend, and just be left alone,” and asserted that, “this is who I am and I’m not going to adjust to any- one.” In addressing the show’s potential as a way of raising awareness about gay and lesbian lifestyles, he stated “the image of the TV Alone creates possibilities.”

Stoffer, a heterosexual ally, had a similar struggle with her identity in relationship to her religious beliefs, arriving on the New Orleans set as a Mormon who attended Brigham Young University. Through “questioning” herself she was able to create stronger “convictions” about herself. She still “holds fast” to her beliefs about herself.  She still “holds fast” to her beliefs about herself.

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