

Dear Peucinian,

Last week we ungrateful punks voted that we need not honor our parents. This week we tackle honoring our mother, but in a much larger, allegorical way.

Resolved: Man Has a Duty to Nature

Aff: Nikolai Gogol

Neg: Andrew Carnegie

In today's political climate, cultural climate, and changing climate, the drive to protect the natural world has become a high profile international issue. This is an issue and drive that has a particularly American history, between the transcendentalist movement, to the establishment of the national park and forest system (more than 30% of the land in the Western United States is publicly owned), to the waves of environmentalist movements. At our own dear little Bowdoin environmental concerns are a selling point and point of contention.

Many would say that there is some gut, deep draw that humans have to the natural world. Something in the core of our brains and hearts drives us to the forests and seashores and deserts, to pristine places where the mark of the human hand is less visible. Perhaps we are drawn there because it is in these places that we see what is not human, and find our own human worth and sorrows and strengths in contrast to an inhuman world. Perhaps it is in the natural world that there is truest beauty. Many of the most firmly atheist people I have encountered still acquire a reverent air when walking among redwoods, or looking over an incoming thunderstorm. To lose ourselves there is almost an act of worship. Nature is our mother, our mother church, and our mother's bosom. Without it humans are nothing. We owe what made us respect and service and to not rob it of its resources and shelter.

However, it is worth mentioning that the natural world has no care for us. This it makes abundantly clear every time the faults rupture or illnesses spread. The duty of humans is fundamentally to human things, and our well being is the priority in decision making. Even if we do have a duty to

protect the environment, that is driven by a need to protect the human species. We keep our rivers unpolluted so that we can drink from or swim in them, not to benefit the river itself.

A good film to inspire points in this debate is Princess Mononoke (Mononoke Hime). Specifically the contrasting characters of a humanitarian industrialist whose efforts destroy and poison the natural world and a girl raised in the woods who forgets or represses her fundamental human identity in her ardent struggle to protect the forest are worth remarking.

I have attached three other brief reference bits in order to inspire mulling before we meet. One comes from an Englishman who watched the Industrial revolution rise, another from Greek who knew a lot about the fall of men, and the last from Japan in 2011. The last image may be the most important reminder that the pathetic fallacy is an especially fallacious one

Come to the top floor of Mass hall at 7:30 pm. Western Business attire is strongly encouraged. Please bring your friends, your fancies, and intellectual fire.

Pinos Loquentes Semper Habemus (We will always have the whispering pines)

Aesop