

Resolved: Bowdoin College Needs the Peucinian Society

Affirmative: Allan Bloom '14

Negative: Maimonides '13

When the Society last convened, Isaiah Berlin and Charlotte Brontë gave a pair of excellent speeches respectively defending and rejecting the notion that **The World Needs America**. Now imagine what it would look like if this affirmation of the power and merit of the United States of America were defended by an impassioned and patriotic Timothy Geithner against a spiteful, disillusioned Barack Obama, and you will know roughly what to expect this Thursday. We will revel, we will examine, we will mock. Egos will be inflated and then punctured that we may watch them flail helplessly through the air making inappropriate noises. Does this college need us? If the Peucinian Society were to suddenly disappear, would Bowdoin lose something of itself that it cannot afford to? Without the kind of radical inquiry we strive for, would this campus's professed goal of free and rigorous intellectual discourse be hollow and incomplete? Do we elevate the life of mind and spirit among the pines? Or are we just a bunch preening wannabe aristocrats squabbling pettily over meaningless abstractions while we congratulate ourselves on how much better we are than everyone else because we read some Plato for a class two years ago?

I encourage you to use this opportunity to meditate on the importance of the Society to you personally and to the College. Thursday night, it is precisely this that we will be celebrating. Dress appropriately; leave your decorum at the door.

With breathless anticipation,
W. H. Auden

PLSH