

## DISPUTATION CXXXVIII 0.5

October 8, 2015

Dear Peucinians,

Last week we discussed the possibility of discourse between the have and have-nots, ultimately deciding - amongst the declaimed members - that those with privilege ought quietly listen. Tomorrow night, in lieu of a disputation, we will have a roundtable discussion on the following...

### **RESOLVED: THE EARTH BELONGS TO THE LIVING**

#### **Introduction by Voltaire**

In a letter to James Madison written in the late 18th century, Thomas Jefferson famously expressed his answer to the question of whether one generation of men had the right to rule over another. He wrote, "The earth belongs in usufruct to the living." In his mind, those who came long before him had no capacity to rule from the grave. A constitution written by the now dead could not, and should never, be immune to alteration or removal by the current generation.

On the other hand, conservative political thinkers like Edmund Burke saw the value of building on what came before us. The foolish attempt to rebuild from scratch or rewrite a constitution every generation would lead to society's downfall. Those ancient beliefs and customs endured the test of time for good reason and, according to this view, should continue to live through us.

Although discussed many years ago this question is somewhat ironically still relevant today. Does the earth belong to us, or to our children? For example, Intergenerational solidarity is direly needed in order to solve global atemporal issues like climate change. What must be done today in order to ensure a better future? How much are we obligated to sacrifice today for the people of tomorrow? When we die, how ought we be remembered?

**7:45 PM Thursday October 8th**  
**Massachusetts Hall Faculty Room**  
**Semi-Formal Attire**

*Note: A roundtable is just like a disputation. The only difference is that there are no two people arguing the affirmative and negative. Instead, Voltaire will deliver a brief overview of the topic - addressing both sides of the issue. Everything else is the same as a regular disputation!*

Sincerely,  
Αἴαντος

*Pinos Loquentes Semper Habemus*