

DISPUTATION CLIII 0.5

September 29, 2016

Dearest Peucinians,

Last week we asked whether or not democracy lives up to its reputation as the best form of government, and whether there are viable alternatives. After confronting its many flaws, we decided as a society that democracy more than any other regime provides the greatest stability and the most desirable outcomes, all the while preserving our freedom. This week we break from our traditional format to engage in a Round Table discussion, in which one orator presents both arguments and leaves it to us to pick up the arguments and carry them to a conclusion.

RESOLVED: THE HOOKUP CULTURE IS GOOD FOR BOWDOIN

Presented By: Denis Diderot '19

Oh yes, I went there.

It is easy to dismiss this resolved statement as trivial compared to our previous discussions, but it undoubtedly touches most of us closer and deeper than the question of the best regime. In the spirit of the Enlightenment, we must say “Nothing that is human is foreign to me” and explore the motivations behind this culture that has been created for us, and that we continue to create for ourselves. If we strive to live consistently and deliberately, we must know where we stand on the most important questions before we find ourselves in a position to act and get lost in the heat of the moment. To live an examined life is to investigate the uncomfortable, the obscene, the and the sacred — all relevant to this particular discussion.

Most students who have not participated in [*insert college house name; not Howell*]’s bacchanals themselves have heard animated conversations about them during their Sunday brunches. On our very campus, some students pursue casual encounters with greater fervor than they do knowledge, and when we find our minds drifting in the classroom, they naturally settle on those missed encounters that hold so much promise. Our weekend rendezvous may develop into serious relationships, or they might not. What’s so wrong about that? Isn’t college the best time to explore sexuality and learn more about what it is that we desire the most?

Those among us who have lamented the poverty of modern concepts and language surely do not need to be reminded that we no longer speak of *Eros* as the ancients did. We casually throw around the word love so that it might refer to our favorite dessert, the Prime Minister of Canada, Drake’s “Views”, and our life partner with apparently equal force. In ancient Greece, love of knowledge, love of art, love of God, love of sensual pleasure, love for another person — these things belonged to the single category *Eros*, distinct from all other forms of love (*storge*, *philia*, *agape*) because they relate to our most profound longings and desires as human beings. *Eros* is about our infinite desires, and our desire for what is infinite. As such, not even sex devoid of romance could be understood in all its vitality without reference to its negation, *thanatos*, death as abridgment of the infinite. It is only our mortality that fuels the urgency and intensity of our desire, for otherwise we could experience everything with leisure. Are we completely without this concept of desire, or does it still lurk in our subconscious? Where does it stand with *Eros* for us?

Human sexuality, like human beings themselves, is incredibly complicated and varied. Due to societal norms and advancements in contraception, we have more options before us than any previous generation. For some this is liberating, for others it is worrisome, and for still other it may be paralyzing. Whether it is generally healthier or not for casual encounters to be as accessible to us as they are, is the question before us.

Thursday September 29th, 8:20 PM --TAKE NOTE OF THE LATE START TIME--
3rd Floor of Massachusetts Hall
Semi-Formal Attire

Yours,
μὲνω - Meno

Pinos Loquentes Semper Habemus