

DISPUTATION CLXX

October 12, 2017

Dear Peucinians,

Welcome back from your surely convivial celebrations of Christopher Columbus! It's been so long since we've met, and I cannot wait to get back into it. Last time, after an excellent discussion led by Diderot, the table was split on whether Confederate monuments ought be taken down (although the declaimed members leaned to the negative). This week we return to a subject that is relevant to us all and every person who's ever lived: death. To my horror and curiosity, human innovation could [one day](#) surmount the ever-present, ghastly phantom of mortality. This prospect suggests a sometimes chilling, sometimes invigorating proposition.

RESOLVED: LIVE FOREVER

Affirmative: Winston Churchill '20

Negative: Simone Weil '20

There is so much to do and so little time. How could we possibly see every sight, taste every flavor, hear every sound, smell every fragrance, and feel every sensation before we croak, having not, in all likelihood, lived longer than a century? How much there is to learn! If only we had more time, we might discover greater truths and create more wonders. Great sages, these impossibly old elders, could provide invaluable wisdom for generations to come, binding the past and future of humanity more tightly than ever before. We would be free to let go of legacy, needless urgency, and much anxiety. We could live our lives many times over. Surely, more time leads to more pleasures. More importantly, with more time and no fear of death, the world's greatest evils will chip away to nothing.

More time, yes. But infinite time? Eventually we will run out of things to do, and boredom will become suffering. Suffering, yes, because as we lived forever—forever—we watched our loved ones die. With death on the horizon, our time becomes precious, and this value translates to greater happiness than could be had over a longer—an infinite—span. Our time with loved ones (and books, and ideas, and nature) is invaluable, and therefore far more meaningful. The generations of old, though we mourn them, gave us wonderful gifts when they passed on, and they were all the more marvelous because they passed when they did—their ideas and legacy take on a new spirit in our hands.

The implications of immortality are too far-reaching for an email of reasonable length. I trust that you understand the gravity of the question. Know this: whether you choose finite or infinite life, your choice is final. What will it be, Peucinians?

Thursday, October 12, 7:45 p.m.

Third Floor of Massachusetts Hall

Semi-formal attire

Sincerely,
Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Pinos Loquentes Semper Habemus