

DISPUTATION CXLV 0.5

February 25, 2016

Dear Peucinians,

John Stuart Mill once famously wrote, “Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.” The tricky part of that is figuring out what we ought do with that sovereignty - especially when deciding the *fate of our body and mind*. Death, like taxes, is inevitable. However, how we choose to enter the abyss is up for debate.

RESOLVED: QUALITY SHOULD OUTWEIGH QUANTITY OF LIFE

Roundtable, presented by Andrew Carnegie

Socrates, instead of choosing exile and a life unexamined, chose to end his own life. I say he chose to end his own life, because his defense in *The Apology* was so weak that one would not conclude otherwise. Upon deciding that his life beyond the walls of Athens was not worth living, he drank his hemlock and said goodnight.

Fortunately for us, today there are more humane ways for us to choose death. Medicine has advanced to the point where the discussion of “how long ought someone live” is relevant, especially when dealing with - for example - terminally ill patients. What do we think if a person decides that death upon command is sweeter than a prolonged life of suffering?

The question we are forced to grapple with at this roundtable is the following: what makes life worth living? Is life a valuable container that should be preserved - despite the condition of the person living it? Or, is the value of life measured by the things we use to fill it? If I am sick, alone, decrepit, and on the brink of death - should I ask that the plugged be pulled and doves be released at my wake? Or instead, should I smile at my feebly beating heart and say yes to life, despite my suffering, and go on?

As usual.

*7:45 PM Thursday February 25th
Massachusetts Hall Faculty Room (Top Floor)
Semi-Formal Attire*

Sincerely,
Ajax

Pinos Loquentes Semper Habemus