

## DISPUTATION CLXXVIII

February 8, 2018

Dear Peucinians:

Last night, I was sitting on my couch translating Book III of Vergil's *Aeneid*—Aeneas and his boys are getting bounced from Thrace to Delos to Crete, which would be a great vacation were they not also suffering extraordinary verbal abuse from the gods (blessed they be)—and my eyelids started drooping, lower and lower, and the curvature of my back bent more and more, until I was unable to continue my translation. I have since finished it. (I actually briefly thought about laying down the translation in this email, but I actually want you all to get to the end of this thing). Anyway, I fell asleep on my couch prematurely (Diderot called it “slumpt”), and now this email is coming out “late.” This reflects more on my studiousness and focus than on Vergil. Thank you for your patience; I understand many of you were distressed last night. I'm OK.

Side note, did anyone see the King *deign to rise from his throne* to drop a nasty triple double and buzzer beater W on the TWolves last night? I mean *my god*. We are all witnessing LeStrivingForGreatness.

Tonight, the Class of 2021 continues its streak of disputants—up to four now—with the appearance at the lectern of Archer, he of the crocs and very long tie. Archer will be the first freshman to take the negative, denying the Beauty and Truth of Huxley's proposal...

### **RESOLVED: WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO RAISE CHILDREN**

**Affirmative: Aldous Huxley '20**

**Negative: Archer Thomas '21**

Much like my grandparents who can't let it rest, Hux believes we are obligated to raise children. Our best lives will involve raising children, whether they be biologically ours or adopted. Raising children is a fulfilling, lifelong endeavor, one of soul-lifting moments and a deep sense of meaning. We must clarify and commit to our moral values, and in doing so, we develop a common understanding with people around the world and in our history. Furthermore, our children are our best chance of changing the world for the better through concrete action, and we—the people on this email list, the people who will show up tonight—are well-equipped to do the job right. Very few things are more important.

Personal choice might be more important. We may carry out lives of virtue without raising children, making the world a better place through our own actions and finding fulfillment in other activities. People who do so surely have not broken a moral obligation; in fact, would they have been bad parents, they might be morally obligated *not* to have children. And as it may be, some Peucinians might be bad parents, for parenting potential is not something that scales with privilege, education, or virtue. We can channel, if we please, the time and energy associated with a child-free life toward romantic fulfillment, service, pleasure, or anything we can imagine.

Peucinians, we have a bold proposition before us and a chance to reckon with our futures. We all come from a long line of parents—a *very* long line—and so we must ask ourselves whether we ought, nay, *must*, continue it. I look forward to our discussion tonight.

**Thursday, February 8, 7:45 p.m.**

**Third Floor of Massachusetts Hall**

**Semi-formal attire**

*PLSH*,  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau

P.S. Administrative note: Because Huxley is disputing, Churchill will fill in as Poet Laureate. This will not affect her duties as Chronicler, which she will also carry out.

*Ergo age, care pater, cervici imponere nostrae;  
ipse subibo umeris, nec me labor iste gravabit;  
quo res cumque cadent, unum et commune periculum,  
una salus ambobus erit. Mihi parvus Iulus  
sit comes, et longe servet vestigia coniunx*  
— Vergil, *Aeneid*, Book II, 707-711

‘So come, dear father, climb up onto my shoulders!  
I will carry you on my back. This labor of love  
will never wear me down. Whatever falls to us now,  
we both will share one peril, one path to safety.  
Little Iulus, walk beside me, and you, my wife,  
follow me at a distance, in my footsteps.’  
*trans.* Robert Fagles

