

DISPUTATION CLXXXIII

April 19, 2018

Dear Peucinians:

The last time we met we debated whether social media platforms are undermining democracy, ultimately deciding that they do not—or, at least not inherently. After a two-week hiatus for Council elections and leadership transition, we're back to business to celebrate Earth Day in the only way Peucinian knows how: questioning everything until we reach bedrock.

RESOLVED: NATURE IS OURS FOR THE TAKING

A roundtable presented by Madame de Staël '19

This roundtable demands that we ask both what **is** and what **ought** to be. What is nature? What is the relationship of humanity to nature? (Are we nature?) What does it mean for ecosystems to be “healthy,” or for areas to be “wilderness” or “pristine”? What is biodiversity? Why is conservation important? What nature is “beautiful,” and what nature is “New Jersey”?

Does nature have intrinsic value?

Given our answers to those questions, do we carry any duties vis-à-vis nature? Is conservation important beyond what value it generates for human beings? Is climate change ecologically significant beyond its effects on human beings? Is humanity capable of understanding ecosystems, and whether we are or aren't, is it rightfully our job to manipulate them either for “exploitation” or “conservation”?

Peucinians, we are not asking whether you are for or against environmentalism; the time for such easy questions is past. We are asking more fundamental questions about nature and human utility, what we value in the world, and whether our duties to other people and our duties to the planet conflict—and if they do, which duties win out?

Thursday, April 19, 8 PM

Third Floor of Massachusetts Hall

Semi-formal attire

PLSH,

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

P.S. Please mark your calendars for the lecture we are hosting with Professor Arlene Saxonhouse of the University of Michigan. Her research focus is on political theory, women's studies, and classics, and she is an academic rockstar. She will be speaking on “Who Speaks: Political Animals and Gender in Sophocles' *Ajax*” in the **Shannon Room on Tuesday, April 24, at 7:15 PM**. I will circulate some brief reading materials this weekend for those who are interested.

Who Speaks: Political Animals and Gender in Sophocles' *Ajax*

Professor Arlene Saxonhouse
University of Michigan
Classics and Women's Studies Departments



Tuesday April 24th
7:15 PM
Shannon Room, Hubbard Hall

Sponsored by: Peucinian Society, Classics Department,
Government Department, Gender and Women's Studies Department