

DISPUTATION CLXXXVIII

September 27, 2018

Dear Peucinians,

After last week's lively disputation on the methods of social change, we re-attach Sappho and Alcott at the hip and move onward—

Often we've asked around our table, what should Bowdoin, in light of its *liberal arts* label, teach: the value of service, virtue, useful skills, great books? Now we ask, is it time to put the arts back in liberal arts?

RESOLVED: ARTISTIC EXPRESSION MUST BE CENTRAL TO A LIBERAL EDUCATION

A roundtable presented by Denis Diderot '19

I can't sing for squat, write poetry worth praise, handle an instrument, or even speak about art like an educated person. This failing is partly my own, because I haven't sought out artistic education. (I got my VPA credit in Professor Jill Pearlman's urban history course—a great course, but sort of a copout for “visual arts.”)

But that was only the *study* of art. I never had to produce any myself, nor will I have to, and nor am I likely to choose to. Am I liberally educated? Should Bowdoin have forced, coerced, or nudged me into expressing myself artistically?

Are my papers, tightly reasoned and narrowly argued (when done well), examples of artistic expression? What about the speeches I've given in many of my classics courses?

Aren't there enough opportunities for artistic expression in the extracurriculum for those who desire them? Why foist this expressive burden on the Philistines and the consumers of art who don't give back?

What would happen if Bowdoin mandated artistic expression? Would students live in a [fever dream](#), in which an effort to promote individuality ironically warps and twists into suppressing the same? Would more [song](#) drift across the quad at night? Would we be fuller, more liberal, happier students?

Bring your thoughts, bring your questions, bring your friends—see you soon.

Thursday, September 27th

7:45 PM

Third Floor of Massachusetts Hall

Semi-formal attire encouraged (see Postscript)

PLSH,

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

President, Peucinian Society

POSTSCRIPT

Why do we dress up?

Although our dress code can seem uninviting at first glance, we use it as a way to distinguish our discussions from the rest of the week's activities. This marks disputations as something special and worthy of our attention. In choosing to dress ourselves differently, we convey respect for the event and for each other, much in the same way one would for *a capella* or mock trial. If you choose to attend a disputation, feel free to dress in a way that is special and comfortable for you.