

Disputation XL

Dear Peucinian Society,

We are now entering the thick of the academic year. Continuing our meetings even as the burden of coursework increases will confirm that the Society has acquired serious momentum. Our earnest disputation last week on the resolution **“War is never noble,”** was repudiated by a vote of 15-4. Even our most pacifist members could imagine the possibility of a noble war.

Steve Robinson '11 argued for the perpetuation of a “just war theory” that leaves room for honorable and praiseworthy wars. His case rested heavily on American and British involvement in WWII. Nyle Usmani '12 focused on the blameworthy motives that drive all war. Applying today's emphasis on gender psychology to war, he laid harsh criticism on those who resort to war, arguing that they are almost always driven by “masculine insecurity.” The Society rejected Usmani's reductionism and his argument that all war was part of the same laughable game of, “Mine is bigger than yours.”

This week, we will delve deeper into the abyss of the human psyche. Since the Freudian turn in human psychology, we've known that unconscious impulses, desires, and motives powerfully influence human behavior. We've largely accepted that there is a hostile tension between our fiery sexual “id” and the external authorities that make human misery unavoidable. Neuroscience teaches us that some people have misfiring neurons. Sociology teaches us that bad parenting can have a horrible effect on teenage moods.

Since the 1990s, we've witnessed the rise of the belief that factors which contribute to unhappiness should be circumnavigated by prescribing anti-depressants and other pills designed to make us happier. **It is now fair to speak of a “Psychopharmacological Revolution” in human affairs.** Diagnoses of manic-depressive disorder, ADD, depression, and other psychiatric or neurological problems are skyrocketing. With this growth in diagnoses, we've seen a simultaneous increase in the prescription of drugs like Prozac, Valium, and Ritalin.

Some argue that these pharmaceuticals are responsibly prescribed, alleviate sorrows which would otherwise tear families apart, and provide individuals with a sense of contentment otherwise unattainable. Others argue that these drugs alienate us from natural sources of happiness and prevent people from addressing the sources of distress in their lives.

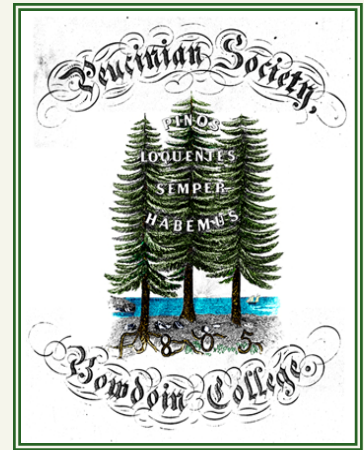
**Resolved: The Society believes the
“Psychopharmacological Revolution” is
making us happier.**

Affirmative: Rutledge Long '10
Negative: Carlo Davis '12

7:30 p.m. in Massachusetts Hall
Thursday, September 24 2009

Yours Truly,

The Peucinian Society Council



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Address

380 Smith Union
Brunswick, Me 04011

Phone

847-212-4682