

## Disputation CXCVI

February 14, 2019

Dear Peucinians:

Last week, the table deadlocked on *states should recognize a human right to migration*, but despite an instantly classic oration from Gilgamesh, Angelou persuaded the Peucinian establishment to affirm the resolution by six votes. Several questions remain to be explored further, particularly about the consequences of using a “rights” discourse over a merely political one.

With our celebration of St. Valentine and the enigmatic god Eros behind us, we welcome back Saul Bellow the brazen from his semester in Athens; he returns preaching some new gospel. Ernest “\$hack-daddy” Shackleton will approach the lectern for his first time to talk some reason into this totally unhinged man...

### RESOLVED: NEVER MIND THE NEWS

**Affirmative: Saul Bellow '20**

**Negative: Sir Ernest Shackleton'21**

You’ve got to say, “I’m a human being. God Dammit, my life has value.” So, I want you to get up now. I want all of you to get up out of your chairs. I want you to get up right now and go to the window. Open it, and stick your head out, and yell: “I’m as mad as hell, and I’m not gonna take this anymore!”

—Howard Beale, in *Network* (1976)

The 1976 film *Network* chronicles the slide into insanity suffered by Howard Beale, a longtime TV news anchor. He learns he has two weeks left on the network before he has to leave due to declining ratings. Out of anger, Beale [rants to his audience](#) that the news is *bullshit*, asking them to see the futility of following the depressing events of the world every day and to *get mad*. Naturally, after Beale’s breakdown on TV, his ratings soar. I won’t spoil the rest, but it’s worth your time. (If ‘70s films aren’t your thing, Bryan Cranston’s recent adaptation on Broadway is arguably better.) *Network* seems prescient to me now, when so much of our TV news is dominated by emotion and “[that’s the way it is](#)” feels so far away.

Our access to information around the world has never been greater. The horrors half a world away are at our fingertips. Ought we pay any attention?

Yours in the cause of radically free inquiry,  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau

**Peucinian Society Disputation CXCVI**

**Thursday, February 14th, 7:45 PM\***

**Third Floor of Massachusetts Hall**

**Semi-formal attire encouraged**

\*Let’s really start at 8:15, please.

*Pinos Loquentes Semper Habemus*