

ERUDITION

SAVE THE DATE:
EVENTS SPRING 2008

FEBRUARY 11, 2008

Mark Oppenheimer
Lecture

*"How Studying Oratory
and Rhetoric Makes Us
Better Citizens"*

6:00 pm Reception,
Texana Room, DeGolyer Library

6:30 pm Reading,
Stanley Marcus Reading Room,
DeGolyer Library

FEBRUARY 21, 2008

Jewell Parker Rhodes

*"Douglass' Woman –
Reimagining History and
Women's Lives"*

6:00 pm Reception,
Texana Room, DeGolyer Library

6:30 pm Reading,
Stanley Marcus Reading Room,
DeGolyer Library

MARCH 27, 2008

Robert Caserio

*"In the Cage: Passion's
Inhibition of Agency
in Novelistic Tradition"*

6:00 pm Reception,
Texana Room, DeGolyer Library

6:30 pm Reading,
Stanley Marcus Reading Room,
DeGolyer Library

APRIL 10, 2008

Tom DiPiero

"How To Do Things with Birds"

6:00 pm Reception,
Texana Room, DeGolyer Library

6:30 pm Reading,
Stanley Marcus Reading Room,
DeGolyer Library

SMU Department of English

2007 • issue 2

Welcoming Angela Ards: the Newest Addition to SMU's English Department

When we scheduled this interview with Dr. Angela Ards, we figured it would take at most thirty minutes. However, sitting at the Snider Plaza Starbucks, our

thirty minutes quickly turned into one hour, then two, then nearly three!

Ards, the newest member of the English Department Faculty at SMU, regaled us with fascinating stories about her work as a journalist in New York City, patiently quelled all of our fears about surviving a Ph.D. program in English and generally won our complete admiration. At the end of the interview, my co-editor and I decided we couldn't wait for her to teach one of our classes.

A native of Dallas, Ards received her B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and later obtained her M.A. in Afro-American Studies at UCLA. She has worked as a journalist for New York City's famed *Village Voice*, the seminal feminist magazine *Ms.*, and the respected political periodical, *The Nation*. While in New York, she was awarded a Revson Fellowship by Columbia University. She then went on to complete her Ph.D. in English from Princeton University.

Ards told us that she started became interested in the field of journalism after she finished her M.A. She said, "I had always written on my own but had never written for a newspaper. I told a friend, I want to be a writer but didn't really know what that meant. He said, 'call the *Voice*.' So I did." Still living in Los Angeles at the time, the *Voice* editor encour-

aged her to come to New York for an interview. She went to the *Village Voice* offices, took a copy-editing test, and landed a job immediately. Thus began her career in journalism.



Angela Ards

While at the *Voice*, Ards covered stories about New York City life, arts and events, as well as political activists and conferences. She continued to write about African-American, feminist, and cultural issues at *Ms. Magazine*, *Vibe*, and *The Nation*, at which she won the Haywood Burns Fellowship. She also contributed an article to the book *Still Lifting, Still Climbing: Contemporary African American Women's Activism* (New York University Press, 1999).

A volunteer and activist herself, Ards served as an associate program officer in the Surdna Foundation's Effective Citizenry Program, a group focused on engaging young people in political participation. She held positions on the boards of LISTEN, Inc., an organization based in Washington, D.C., which

"SMU students are bright, engaged and very enthusiastic. I enjoyed teaching them this Fall and can't wait to work with them again in the Spring."

Letter from Ezra Greenspan, Department Chair

This is a year of long-term significance for the SMU Department of English. After three years of planning, we now have a Ph.D. program in place and our first six students leading the way. We will soon begin recruiting our second class, but before they arrive officially on campus we will be inaugurating a new week-long summer institute for first- (and eventually also second-) year Ph.D. students at SMU-in-Taos, one of the few such programs in the country directed specifically and exclusively to graduate students.

This semester the English Department welcomes into its ranks two new members. Angela Ards, a specialist in contemporary African American writing, arrives fresh from completion of her Ph.D. at Princeton. She comes with striking credentials, talents, and imagination; we have great expectations for her contribution to our program and to our students. Jennifer Key arrives as a Frenshley Visiting Assistant Professor to teach in our creative writing program. Doubly gifted as a poet and a fiction writer, she is the first person to teach both genres for our program.

We enter this year anticipating the rewards to come from three major gifts made to the Department over the course of 2006-07. We learned at the Dedman College dinner in May 2007 that we will soon receive a new endowed chair in creative writing – the gift of the family of Laurence Perrine, a distinguished member and former chair of our department. In fall 2009 we will begin a national search to fill the new Perrine Chair. This spring we also received a six-year commitment from Rebecca (Class of 2006) and Pat dePole to fund an endowment that will enhance our undergraduate program. Finally, we saw the year-long campaign to honor Marsh Terry's splendid service to the University culminate in an endowment that will underwrite the Marshall Terry Scholarship in creative writing. We feel privileged to be the recipient of such remarkable benefaction from our friends and supporters.

Our faculty's reputation for outstanding teaching and scholarship was borne out this past year as our colleagues won three of the university's highest prizes: David Haynes, a Ford Research Fellowship; Michael Householder, a Golden Mustang Award; and Bonnie Wheeler, an Altshuler Distinguished Teaching Award. Not to be outdone, Leslie Reid, our office manager and all-purpose administrative assistant, won the President's Staff Recognition Award for Innovation.

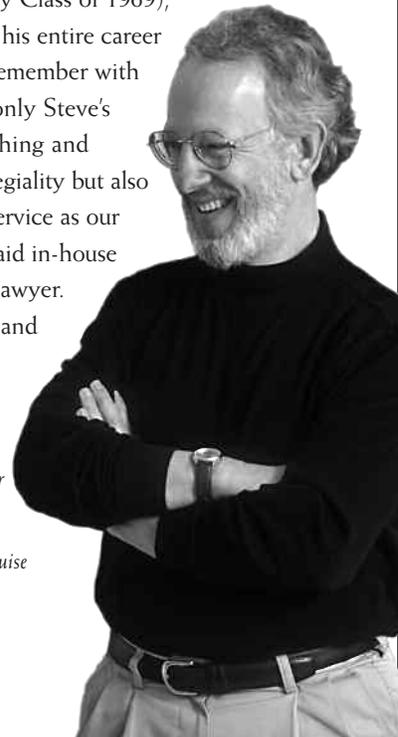
Our colleagues have been accumulating frequent flyer miles in the line of duty, presenting papers and/or conducting research across four different continents. Our international travelers this past year included Suzanne Bost, who spoke at conferences in Cairo, Egypt; Pueblo, Mexico; and Montreal, Canada; Dennis Foster, at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth; Michael Householder at L'École normale supérieure, lettres et sciences humaines, in Lyon, France; Beth Newman in Victoria, British Columbia; Willard Spiegelman at various locations in Paris, Rome, and Florence; Rajani Sudan at the Australia National University in Sydney; and Steve Weisenburger in Madrid. Closer to home, our colleagues gave dozens of talks at conferences across North America.

New publications by our faculty are too numerous to list in their entirety. New books include Tim Rosendale's *Liturgy and Literature in the Making of Protestant England*

(Cambridge UP) and Beth Newman's critical edition of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (Broadview Press). Shorter publications include articles or book chapters by Darryl Dickson-Carr (in *African American Humor, Irony and Satire*), Michael Householder (*Huntington Library Quarterly*), Lisa Siraganian (*Image and Territory: New Essays on Atom Egoyan*), Willard Spiegelman (*Wall Street Journal*), and Rajani Sudan (*Comparative Drama and Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies*).

This year will mark the bittersweet parting of the English Department and Steve Daniels (Faculty Class of 1969), who has given his entire career to SMU. We remember with gratitude not only Steve's dedicated teaching and unstinting collegiality but also his nonpareil service as our unofficial, unpaid in-house constitutional lawyer. We thank him and wish him well.

Professor Ezra Greenspan is Chair of the English Department, and Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn Chair in Humanities



Angela Ards — continued from page 1

encourages youth leadership development in low-income, urban communities, as well as the Kopkind Colony, a summer program that explores the role of journalism in building social movements.

Ards comes to SMU straight from Princeton. When asked what drew her to SMU, she cited the University's excellent academic reputation and its outstanding English Department. She explained, "I liked this department. I'm not a traditional academic. I'm a journalist. I'm a writer. I have a lot of scholarly interests. I wanted to be in a place that

encourages me to do all of that. I was excited by the people I met across the university as well as what I could do here in terms of my research, utilizing resources both at SMU and in the greater Dallas area."

During her Revson Fellowship, she began a memoir that would later inspire the subject of her doctoral dissertation. Entitled *Affirmative Acts: Political Pieties in African American Women's Contemporary Autobiography*, her dissertation examines how other memoirists express their personal experiences in politics and in shaping African-American history.

The Sick Dog

Sweet pagan heart, Diana of the hunt,
we keep you tethered close to us, slow of
foot, mortal, earthbound, golden girl who once,
a copper bolt, plucked a duck from the blue

sailcloth of sky to feel that emerald throat
pulsing within your own; at whose approach
tall grasses part, where in summer fields sleek
creatures lived and died according to your

quicker unblinking eye, though the bright blood
on your tongue these days is oftener your own
as you erase the trace of everywhere
you've been and bled throughout the house – such dull

quarry for a dog like you. Shaved and stitched
where once sunlight did fasten to your fur,
a sticky burr not even night pulled clean –
your coat of flame the chattering class of birds

embroiders into nests, entwining fur
as if the world were able to rescind
each hard-fought loss and make good use of us,
as if whatever's lost could be retrieved

again. It can't. Listen, if we are saved
at all it will only be by bird beak
and black wing, wren and starling, junk birds that
scavenge the yards at dawn while you watch on

in silence and suffer us our science
as well as our mild God, in whom you can't
believe as you already know how this
will end. Futile the blessing of the priest's

pale hands upon your muzzle when a bone
would be better and more honest at least
for such a wise, all-knowing augurer
of wind and architect of lesser fates

we do not mourn: ruffed grouse or groundhog's neck
in that unholy vise of your grey jaw –
so it comes to all, if not violent then
violated. Rolled over, your stomach's

a map of cancer, cutting, and metastasis.
Where you rest a dark stain seeps. High priestess
of brindled woods, where late you read the runes
of horn and hoof, leaf-litter and twig-snap,

where shadows spill, black hieroglyphics written
by the trees that you alone were born to translate:
love and grief, two sides of the same green leaf.
Here, lace your step through rushes where geese roost,

past oak roots knuckled deep into the banks
of silver lakes returning now to us
as mirrors of their own making. At dusk,
the little lights that lick across the lake

come on whether we're here or not. For now
we are. Be glad. Travel until the day
pulls in her sail, sails on. Beautiful girl,
wherever you're going, I'm going there too.

Ards is excited to share her knowledge of this genre with SMU students this Spring in a class called "Black Like Us: African American Autobiography in the Post-Civil War Era."

"SMU students are bright, engaged and very enthusiastic," Ards told us. "I enjoyed teaching them this Fall and can't wait to work with them again in the Spring." Given Ards' own enthusiasm for writing and for literature, we are confident her students are equally excited to take her class.

by Andrea Luttrell, Ph.D. candidate in English

Poet Jennifer Key, a Frensley
Visiting Assistant Professor, teaches
creative writing at SMU



Poems, whether our own or the ones we read, are the way we redeem darkness for day. To a writer, human experiences such as confusion and loss as well as the wild alchemy of hope and joy must finally be like common coal that with heat and pressure takes shape and blazes into a clean cup of light, a diamond. For when we hold it up to the light, a poem reflects us and our world, a poem written with accuracy and love and great empathy gives all of it back a million times over. We are plunged into darkness, but our words give such radiance.

SMU's English Department Ushers in Its First Class of Ph.D. Students

The Ph.D Program's Inception

A process nearly a decade in the making came to fruition this fall when SMU launched the inaugural year of its Ph.D. program in English. September saw the arrival of six doctoral candidates from across the country. What will the hallmark of this program be? Among all the models and paradigms of graduate programs nationwide, Dr. Ezra Greenspan, Kahn Chair in Humanities and Professor of English, stresses one word: congeniality.

Building on a strong undergraduate and master's program in English, a combination of factors contributed to the birth of the Ph.D. program. An exploratory committee first began the process of deliberation in Fall of 2003. Greenspan recalls, "we looked to see what our own strengths might be—what could we do that other schools couldn't do?" When several new faculty members joined the department, and finances became available, the time was ripe to begin the development process. Greenspan noticed the "sense of shared enterprise" as the faculty began to design a program that combined the best elements of a small, intensive community with a rigorous research university. Dr. Dennis Foster, the Department's Director of Graduate Studies, recalls asking the question, "how are we going to provide something that's interesting and beneficial to students?"

When recruitment for the inaugural class began, the search committee looked for students with leadership qualities as well as a wide distribution of talents, strengths, and academic interests. Foster says they sought candidates "willing to take on the risk and adventure of entering a new program," and identified in the incoming class "a kind of enthusiasm for what was going on." Still, the meticulous planning process aside, when it all came together this fall, he noted "there's

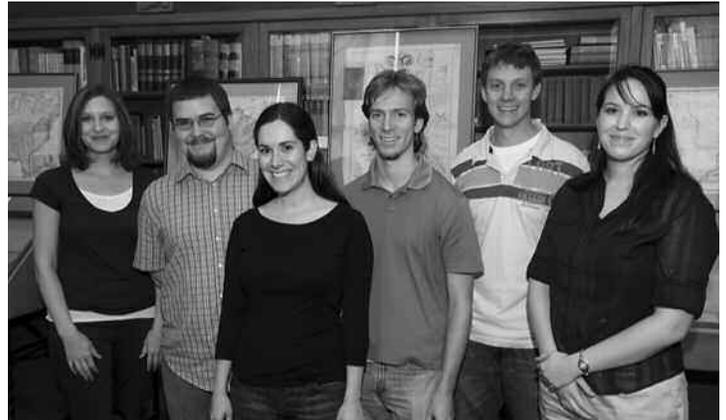
something kind of miraculous about it."

The sense of shared endeavor is contagious. The program is off to an exciting start. The Ph.D. students agree that the accomplished faculty and organic support system are particular strengths of the new program. John

Evans, Ph.D. candidate, notes "when preparing for this program, the department truly put us, the students, first. They took into consideration every aspect of our graduate school lives in order to give us the best chance of success." The location of SMU was also a draw. Ph.D. candidate Andrea Luttrell stated, "Dallas hosts a wealth of artistic, literary, and academic events. The many colleges and universities in the area create a fantastic academic community." Candidate Austin Johnson calls the Fondren Library System "impressive," noting the accessibility of resources from several regional libraries as well as the holdings at SMU.

Courses in the Ph.D Program

Core classes were carefully designed to give the students a strong foundation of literary theory, a knowledge of literary trends and movements, as well as an introduction to the profession. Ph.D. candidate Mike Anderson states that "the program seems to be making a great effort to see that we experience a breadth of coursework." *Advanced Literary Studies*, taught by Dr. Steven Weisenburger, provides an unique orientation to the profession. Students gain practical experience in bibliographic and textual studies that will inform their doctoral research and career. Evans remarks, "We are looking at books from new angles, and we are seeing remark-



SMU's Inaugural Class of Ph.D. candidates (from left to right) Kayla Walker Edin, Austin Johnson, Andrea Luttrell, John Evans, Michael Anderson and Jennifer Boulanger.

able things – how they are made, printed, distributed, advertised, received, and most importantly how these things affect the text at large." *The Southwest Unbound*, taught by Dr. Suzanne Bost, offers a less traditional approach to American literature. As candidate Jennifer Boulanger explains, "we explore a rich tradition of literature from our own region, while learning about the problems associated with attempting to define 'boundaries' of the Southwest." *Technologies of Empire*, with Dr. Rajani Sudan, combines post-colonial theory with environmental and economic theory in order to re-examine 17th century literature. Ph.D. candidate Kayla Walker Edin appreciates the unique nature of the course, noting "we're encouraged to read theory and text in fresh combinations, resulting in a deeper understanding of the historical intersections between cultural encounter, exchange, and text." Finally *Milton*, with Dr. Timothy Rosendale, offers a fresh look at one of the fundamental writers in the English canon. As Johnson puts it, "It's John Milton. How much better can it possibly get?" Each course integrates seminar papers, presentations, and mini-conferences, designed to provide a well-rounded experience in a program geared towards apprenticeship and mentorship.

The Program's Future

The first year of the program is free of teaching, allowing students to fully immerse themselves in the learning process. Pedagogical training over the summer and fall will prepare them to begin teaching next year. Students also look forward to the week-long immersion program at SMU-in-Taos this summer. Future plans already underway include the hiring of new faculty, expansion of library holdings in British and American literature, and further recruitment of diverse, ambitious, and motivated students. Foster notes, "We want to do something that makes other programs say 'we want to do that.'" As the identity of the program continues to emerge, faculty and students alike envision a program hall-marked by quality, congeniality, and nationally-respected research. Greenspan adds, "There's nothing like seeing your former students succeed in their own various ways. We hope students will carry the ethos of the program to their own home institutions and various careers. That would be a wonderful accomplishment."

A Closer Look at the Inaugural Class

Mike Anderson comes to SMU by way of The College of William and Mary and the University of Rochester. He is thrilled to be back in school after an extended absence that saw him dabble in arms control policy for the Department of Defense and acquisition career management for the U.S. Army. While he has been impressed with all the faculty thus far, Mike is particularly excited by the opportunity to work with renowned medieval scholar Bonnie Wheeler.

Jennifer Boulanger received her B.A. from Baylor University in 2006 with double majors in English and Great Texts of the Western Tradition. She began work on her M.A. at SMU in the fall of 2006, taking courses in both the English and the Medieval Studies programs. When the department began discussing the new Ph.D. program, she jumped at the oppor-

tunity to continue work at SMU and to be involved with the exciting process of developing a new program.

Hailing from Dallas, **John Evans** attended The College of Wooster in Ohio and earned his B.A. in English and Philosophy in 2005. Upon graduation he found work at The College of Wooster to help develop the Center for Academic Advising, a program for first-year and sophomore students. In 2006 John moved to Ecuador and taught English as a foreign language for ten months. He is particularly interested in literary

"We want to do something that makes other programs say, 'we want to do that.'"

– DR. DENNIS FOSTER
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE
STUDIES

theory, especially how the philosophy of language can inform that tradition as well as 20th century American literature and how the novel will evolve in the 21st century.

Austin Johnson grew up in the small town of Winnsboro, TX. After spending eighteen consecutive years in a town of less than 5,000 people, he moved to the bustling metropolis of Arkadelphia, AK, where he attended Ouachita Baptist University, majoring in English and with a minor in Theology. He received his B.A. in 2007. While there, he met the beautiful woman who would become his wife, Rachel. Since then, the two of them have been blessed with a baby boy, Emerson. Austin is interested in Early Modern English

poetry and 19th century American poetry.

A native of Texas, **Andrea Luttrell** received her B.A. in English with a minor in creative writing from Barnard College in New York City in 2000. After college, Andrea found work in the publishing industry at Simon & Schuster, Penguin Putnam and Random House. Preferring academia to corporate America, she returned to school and received her MFA in Creative Writing-Fiction from NYU in 2004 where she was awarded the department's Spring Fellowship and served as the editor-in-chief of *Washington Square: the Literary Journal of NYU's Graduate Creative Writing Program*. Since her graduation from NYU, she has worked in development for several non-profit organizations. She hopes to focus on 20th century American Literature and to continue her creative writing at SMU.

Kayla Walker Edin comes to SMU by way of Portland, OR, where she spent the past four years teaching college composition and rhetoric courses. Kayla earned her master's degree in English from Portland State University, where she served as a graduate assistant, instructor, and Assistant Director of Writing. She

earned her B.A. from Seattle Pacific University. Her specific interests lie in late-19th and early-20th century women's literature, and feminist criticism and rhetoric. Between degrees, Kayla enjoyed working at Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, and volunteering with Americorps, teaching violence-prevention classes at a middle school in Seattle, WA.

*by Kayla Walker Edin and Andrea Luttrell,
Ph.D. candidates in English*



DeGolyer Library Director Russell Martin (left) led SMU's first English Ph.D. class on a tour of DeGolyer's Texana room this fall.

Losing Your Page

Today, I saw a seven-year-old
Lying out in a thousand
miles of grass

Hearing the hum of silence
blow through his ears
while he watched the
welkin sky

Fold in and out of the sun
The way people drift in
and out of years.

Your only concern back then
was the temperature rising
under your tongue,
Your homework barking out
of a bag,

The sweet smell of coffee
in the living room
Wiping out from behind
your father's beard
As he crinkled the
newspaper page to page.

At that age, I was like a
question
Blossoming in the dark
Wondering how each person
is a routine
Scheduled into a lifetime
of days.

Now I feel like a sentence
written over and over,
Smudged against the
landscape.
Everyone else is punctuation.

~

by Ben Martin
Senior, SMU

winner of The Lon Tinkle Prize
for Outstanding English Major
in Creative Writing

Dr. Nicolás Kanellos Visits SMU

A prolific scholar, speaker, writer, and publisher, Dr. Nicolás Kanellos finds his sources in unexpected places. At every speaking engagement, he keeps his eyes and ears open for a forgotten text or story. "The stories are out there," he explains. In fact, throughout American history, Hispanics in the U.S. "had something to say about everything, everything, everything." They "fought, marched, spoke, and wrote, but that chapter has been absent from American history." Dr. Kanellos, who currently serves as Professor of Spanish at the University of Houston, is committed to writing that chapter back in.

Dr. Kanellos is the director of a major national research program, *Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage of the United States*, a ten-year project designed to locate, study, index and commit to print and electronic media the whole of U.S. Hispanic literature from Colonial times to 1960. The \$20-million project involves scholars nation-wide, including SMU faculty member David Weber, the director of the Clements Center for Southwest Studies at SMU. Weber states, "No one has done more than Nick Kanellos to bring our nation's forgotten Hispanic writers out of obscurity and back into print."

At a recent Gilbert Lecture, Dr. Kanellos held the audience spell-bound with his stories of tracking down rare texts. Some languish for years in dusty library basements; others turn up in attics, boxes, and private collections. Text by text, the project has rescued thousands of manuscripts and made them available to the public. Several SMU students have benefited already from Kanellos' work. Dr. Suzanne Bost, Associate Professor of English at SMU, used several titles from the project in her classroom this semester. She calls Dr. Kanellos' work "invaluable" and notes that "many of the early

texts went out of print as a result of racism and ethnocentrism among American readers, so they have to be 'recovered' today. Projects like the *Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage* make it possible to study contemporary Latina/o writers in the con-

text of a long tradition with its own distinctive set of aesthetic, cultural, and political concerns."

Kanellos traces his unique scholarly interests back to a childhood spent in New York City and Puerto Rico. This "dual perspective" helped him see the bigger picture: "Unlike a lot of kids who become isolated in the barrios and the big cities, my experience in Puerto Rico made it obvious to me that people had made great strides in [various professions] versus in barrios where we were expected to be maids." By becoming aware of accomplishments in other countries, "I never had that negative complex about being latino. Having this dual perspective means you learn to see things from two or three different vantage points." Reflecting on his current vocation, he says, "I still bring that to what I do."

Growing up, "there was nothing available about history of Latino culture in the U.S. My awareness became more acute when I went to graduate school." Through archival work, "I started to find things that were there- but you had to do a lot of digging." In the communities there were old-timers who had family manuscripts, documents, and stories to tell: "things could be found if we dug deep."

Kanellos' passion for his work shines through when he speaks. Motivated by a sense that something is missing in the American canon and marked by a contagious sense of optimism, Kanellos' rescue mission has just begun. "I think there's a role for the latino experience in the visioning of American literature," he says, and "sooner or later those voices are going to multiply. There are a lot of structural barriers to that happening but sooner or later it will."



Leonor Villegas de Magnón and Aracelito García posing with their White Cross flag, 1914. Courtesy Leonor Villegas de Magnón Papers, *Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage Project*, University of Houston

An Entire Course on The Simpsons?

It seemed like a great idea when I was brainstorming the course with a colleague in the SMU Java Stop. It seemed like an exciting new take on traditional rhetoric courses as I planned my syllabus.

And it *still* seemed clever when I clicked "Send," and the course description made its digital journey to the SMU Rhetoric website.

Two weeks later, I awoke from a nightmare. I dreamt it was my first day of class and the room was filled with students who knew much more about all 18 seasons of *The Simpsons* than I did. What had I gotten myself into? Fortunately, my students this Fall were not like my students in my nightmare. They applied the ideas of Kantian duty and Aristotelian means to the t.v. show, took copious notes while viewing the episodes, and actually stopped occasionally on their way out to thank me for the subject of the class. Not a bad idea after all.

Most of my students came to class claiming the liberal philosophy to teach his own.

Everyone should do what he or she thinks is right. Still, throughout the past decade, I've noticed that students are quite keen to consider other people or events as unfair or plain wrong. I've seen students construct ethical evaluations without being able to articulate the reasoning behind

their judgments. In a post-9/11, post-Enron, post Superbowl Wardrobe Malfunction world, I felt that a class focusing on ethics would be a useful platform for a first-year composition course.

We started the course by diving into a primer on major philosophies in order to fully appreciate the scholarly articles in *The Simpsons and Philosophy*. We examined the essays for content and for rhetorical value – Why are some arguments stronger than others? We rarely see (thank goodness) the formulaic five-paragraph composition in anthologies because there's a big difference between a college writing assignment and an artful essay. While students might be quick to dismiss individual philosophies as rigid and unfulfilling, they are also quick to discover how those passionate ideas shape our modern interpretation of ethics. Moreover, they're writing about those discoveries. I'm stunned by what my students have produced so far. From "Marge's Moral Motivation" to "Simpsonian Sexual Politics," they pay attention to

style, organization, and clarity. In class, I tap my fingers and can't resist mumbling the Burnsian "Excellent!" under my breath.

It's not groundbreaking news to admit that students often teach us as we are teaching them. My students are earnest, optimistic, and genuinely kind-hearted, and for a moment, I wondered if I was jading them by forcing them to watch the Simpson clan's playful familial disfunction. However, I'm dispelled of that notion as I listen to them compare the subtle *Simpsons* antics to those of the racier *South Park* and *Family Guy*. The students now dive into the primary texts of their favorite philosophers and actively readengage scholarly journals on the yellow family that keeps us up-to-date on our latest public gaffs and indiscretions.

—
Dr. Lori Ann Stephens,
Lecturer, Department
of English



like Darfur

As I speak a small, frail woman who has no more to tears to cry (because she has cried all hers, and even borrowed other people's), closes her blank, blank eyes and dies from something unseen, starved child toiling on her wilted breast - in the end, he bites off the nipple. No one will ask why or how the woman died; they might only wonder how she lived that long, and why, and perhaps, for what.

The dead bodies that decorate the earth remind me of flowers growing unexpectedly in a colorful hunger for life. They are not just decorating it, they are also rotting into it, crumbling, breaking down, flesh fast framed, framing, into red earth. The putrid, putrid smell of the bodies is like one's kind, best friend. It is possible to hear it exclaim, hey there! When you open your eyes in the morning. It will also rub your back with

humming hands when you go to sleep, and those times that you may happen to lose your way in blood-red dreams, it will somehow carry you home, like a newly-found hope.

I am also wondering if he had to die so carelessly, that fat man? Without any clothes on - ah, what a lack of self-esteem, what a lack. The hammering, hammering stench of fear that will never cease. Whose blood is this that baptizes the wind? It's a little thicker than usual, that's all. A torso, a long torso without the rest of the body, like it just bloomed from itself. And that beautiful, beautiful child, her long legs frozen in scattered flight towards a reddened, black road, the wind counting the strands of hair on her missing head, I wonder just whose child she is.

Elizabeth Tsbele is a Master's student in SMU's English Department.

This is a publication for alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends of the Department of English.

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