

# The Dialectic

Classics & Philosophy Newsletter  
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## Dear Philosophers and Classicists,

I think David Hume put it best when he said, in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, "Everyone has observed how much more dogs are animated when they hunt in a pack, than when they pursue their game apart. We might, perhaps, be at a loss to explain this phenomenon, if we had not experience of a similar in ourselves."

Check out what those of us in and around UTA's great Department of Philosophy and Humanities have been up to recently, as we all share the love of philosophy and classics that will ever stay ingrained in our souls.

Lizzy "L Dawg" Ruska  
President  
Philosophy Club at UTA

## Professor Susan Haack Speaks!

Professor Susan Haack said the value of science is easiest explained by her contact lenses. If it had not been for their invention, she would be legally blind, but if there had been a cure for the childhood measles that she contracted, she would not need them.

Haack, a professor of philosophy from the University of Miami, came to speak Friday, 28 February 2003, on "What Man Can Achieve When He Really Puts His Mind to It: The Value and Values of Science."

Haack defended the value of science, summarizing her talk on "why we're better off with it, than without it." Currently, she is working on a new book in philosophy of science. She also has a background in the philosophy of language.

Having given talks in the past on the "Epistemological Value of Science," Haack drew from the writings of Thomas Huxley, in which he described science as "a noble goal."

The title of her talk was borrowed from a museum sign displaying Nazi science used in the Holocaust saying, "What Man Can Achieve When He Really Puts His Mind To It."

Despite some of past science, Haack said that there is definitely a true value.

"Not all science is honest," she said, "but honesty is built into the process, that is studying the work of others."

She addressed the value of science as one of the greatest areas for possible criticism, but she also discussed three other areas. The first she called "unweaving the rainbow," that is, destroying naturalism in the tearing down and rebuilding of ideas.



## Professor Haack enjoys the post-lecture reception

The second area was science taking the place of religion—the Darwinist beliefs in evolution and so on. She disputed whether science could ever truly take the place of religion.

The third area was the sexism of the scientific world, as we continue to wonder, "how science would be different if there were more women scientists." Often, she said, science is said to be "a sexist enterprise."

Despite this, Haack said the benefits outweighed the flaws. "Science brings real pitfalls and real dangers, as well as real benefits," she said.

Haack said that while there can never truly be a perfect science, the value to people of its discoveries cannot be ignored.

And, after all, she said, "It, and we, are only human."

## Lewis and Clark the Subject of *Phi Sigma Tau* Faculty Colloquium

In the early 1800's, William Clark and Meriwether Lewis set off west on one of the greatest journeys in history. Now, two centuries later, our resident expert on the expedition,

Professor Keith Burgess-Jackson, discussed the “The Virtues and Vices of Lewis and Clark” at a *Phi Sigma Tau* Faculty Colloquium on 28 March 2003.



Burgess-Jackson drew up an extensive timeline of the expedition for a group of interested philosophy students, historians, and scholars. He has plans to teach a course on the subject in Fall, 2004.

He said that it was in his reading about Lewis and Clark’s journey that he began to notice virtue and vice; and in the adventure that ensued for the team leaders on the expedition, their journal entries best displayed their virtues.

Burgess-Jackson’s timeline of events includes the planning of the expedition by Lewis and President Thomas Jefferson, and winds its way through the teaming up with Clark in 1803, the meeting of Sacagawea in 1804, and the publications of histories that have continued to the present day.

The expedition continues to be studied, and students and faculty anxiously await a new class in the philosophy curriculum.

### **Adventures in Antiquity!**

The Classics Club hosted the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Adventures in Antiquity with a lecture by Professor Kim Shelton from the University of Texas at Austin on Thursday, 17 April 2003. Dr. Shelton has spent several years studying and working on the excavations at Mycenae, Greece.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Heinrich Schliemann began to wonder if Homer’s epics were actually history and not myth; and in 1876 he began excavations at Mycenae. Thus, a look into the Bronze Age was born.

Dr. Shelton said that about 98% of the physical remains that date to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. come from this particular site. In 1876, Schliemann discovered a grave circle—now called Grave Circle A—which included 19 graves and 40 pounds of gold.

Later, archeologists discovered Grave Circle B, which is actually older than Grave Circle A, dating from about 1560-1550 B.C. Starting sometime in the 1500’s, the burial style changed and now archeologists are finding what are called bee-hive tombs, or *tholos* tombs.



**Edward Dowdell, 1834 drawing of the interior of what Schliemann called the *Treasury of Atreus*, after a king mentioned by Homer in *The Iliad***

Dr. Shelton described how the city of Mycenae is now being studied extensively, from houses to pottery, to speculation about a “cult center.” While many excavating the site don’t agree on an interpretation of the artifacts, there is still much to be learned from Mycenae.

“There are still a lot of questions, there’s still a lot of things we don’t know,” she said. “There are many things left for us to discover.”

### **Homerathon an Epic Success**

Wind, rain, or shine, Homer’s *Odyssey* is still arguably one of the greatest epics in history. Last spring, the Classical Studies Program at UTA proved that with 2003’s rainy Homerathon. Readings of Homer’s *Odyssey* still took place all day despite the rain.



**Participants fight valiantly to stay dry**

Many wore hats while reading their 15-minute segments of the text and displayed their 2003 Homerathon tee-shirts, which depicted characters from the epic—including the Cyclops wearing a UTA tee-shirt!



**Jesse B. Hodge proudly displays Homerathon tee**

Participants said that the event was a success despite the weather and that people had a good time. If you didn't get to participate this past spring, mark your calendar for Spring 2004. Who knows what might happen!

### **Philosophy and Classics Picnic Rawks**

This year's Philosophy and Classics picnic was a great success, with hamburgers, hotdogs, cake and conversation. The picnic was held in Veteran's Park north pavilion and was truly the social event of the season with more than 30 participants from philosophy and from classics.



**Picnic goers feast on fellowship and fun**

It was also time to bid a fond farewell to Professor Tim Mahoney, who was leaving UTA after Spring 2003 for a job at Providence College in Rhode Island. Philosophy student Cynthia Nielsen also received a round of applause as one of the new *Phi Sigma Tau* initiates.



**Our honorees get their 15 minutes**

Games of Frisbee and Twister were played and there was talk of picnics of yesteryear. As chair Denny Bradshaw said, "Picnic time rawks!"

### **DEPARTMENTAL EVENT: Professor Chiasson awarded "20-year Service" Pin!**

In commemoration of Professor Charles Chiasson's 20 years of service to UTA, he was recognized with a pin on 30 April 2003. Interim President Charles Sorber and his wife had hosted a reception for the honorees, but Chiasson was given his pin in a private departmental observance.



**Professor Chiasson overwhelmed by emotion**

"The natural high will last for days to come," said Chiasson.

### **Feeling grateful...nostalgic...generous?**

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<http://www.uta.edu/philosophy/contact.php>.

Also be sure to send your alumni news to [bhughes@uta.edu](mailto:bhughes@uta.edu).