for many undergraduates. (The best time to get to people is when they are starting to ask philosophical questions, i.e., in high school). However, the ethics courses I teach expose those few students that are open to reason to proper ethics. The courses also offer an antidote to the rest of their university education in the humanities and the social sciences by showing an alternative to mysticism, altruism, and collectivism. But most importantly, courses like mine make it more difficult for students to hold onto irrational views—and easier to pursue rationality, even if they are not "converted."

Business people desperately need moral ammunition; they are potentially the Atlases of the world. Courses like the ones I teach provide it for a few—and perhaps plant the seeds for others.

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## Life, Death, and Philosophy in New York City

by Ken West

New Yorkers (and those who watch this city closely) were visibly relieved when the man who had brutally beaten a young woman in Central Park was finally apprehended. This 22-year-old man had also savagely attacked three other women—killing one—during an eight day period.

When the police arrested him he was carrying *The Art of Peace* by Morihei Ueshiba, a book which, according to the *New York Times,* is about "combat, Buddhism and life." The *Times*' article ("Suspect's Slip-Up Led to Confession, Detectives Say," June 15) also mentions other interesting facts about the 22 year old man, whom neighbors "describe as a quiet, intelligent man with a penchant for violent movies..." When one of the police detectives, who was familiar with the book the attacker had been carrying, discussed it with him, the young killer "began talking about Immanuel Kant, the philosopher, but the detective, unfamiliar with Kant, steered the conversation back to aikido and *The Art of Peace.*"

Although we may never know how much this killer had been influenced by Immanuel Kant, Kant's philosophy is tailor-made for irrational behavior. According to the *Times*' article, the attacker "spoke of 'his mind being taken over, a kind of rage,'" when finding his next randomly chosen victim. In her essay "Philosophical Detection," Ayn Rand wrote that, "The philosophy of Kant is a systematic rationalization of every major psychological vice." It is, according to Rand, "a rationalization for the hatred of reality. . . a rationalization for the hatred of reason [and] . . . a rationalization for the supremacy of emotions. . ."

Most in the media were totally unaware of an another event taking place in the city. Yet, if New York, not to mention the rest of the world, is to have a future, this event may signal its rebirth.

On a warm Saturday night in midtown Manhattan a different philosophy was being discussed at a dinner celebration, held at a small hotel on Lexington Avenue at East 38th St. Guests were there to honor the first graduates of an extraordinary school—the Objectivist Graduate Center.

According to the Ayn Rand Institute, the OGC is "a two-year program of advanced seminars and tutorials for future Objectivist scholars preparing for careers as professional teachers and writers. . . [where] students learn a rational method of philosophical thinking." One of the graduates said later that night, "There is no where else on earth where you can get this kind of training."

I attended this dinner to honor the first crop of graduates and was struck by the level of intelligence, seriousness, and commitment displayed by these young people. One graduate mentioned that every single word has life and death significance in OGC courses. She called it the intellectual equivalent of "pure oxygen." This student went on to say that "the most important thing a man can do for another is to help develop his mind." The future of the world depends on it.

Philosophy is a matter of life and death. Ayn Rand has given us the philosophical tools for a rebirth of reason. It is time to put them to work.

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