

Special points of interest:

- Professors Stephen Owen and Kathleen Ryor are guest lecturers for the Paul Hsiang Lecture series
- Motivated East Asian Studies graduate students set up their own lecture series
- Joy Kogawa gives the spring 2003 McDonald-Currie Lecture, sponsored by the Faculty of Arts

“Mercy In an Age of War”: Joy Kogawa Lectures at McGill

Internationally renowned novelist Joy Kogawa, at the invitation of Professor Thomas Lamarre, Chair of the Department of East Asian Studies, came to McGill to present the McDonald-Currie lecture, sponsored by the Faculty of Arts and entitled “Mercy in an Age of War,” on Tuesday, April 8th. Preceding her university-wide lecture, Ms. Kogawa generously gave her time to conduct a seminar with a group of East Asian Studies graduate students on Monday, April 7th.



Ms. Kogawa’s seminar focused primarily on her two most famous novels: the first, Obasan, uses its adult narrator Naomi’s reminiscences to examine the history of Japanese-Canadian internment during World War II. The second, The Rain Ascends, follows its heroine Millicent through her personal struggle with her discovery that her father, a clergyman, has abused young boys throughout his tenure as a man of the cloth. Using these two narratives as a starting point, Ms. Kogawa proposed a potential model for an ethics of fiction-writing. Fiction, argued Ms. Kogawa, permits the author to open herself radically to the narrative of an Other, often silenced. The novel becomes a privileged space where one may reconcile the authority of the writer’s voice with the silenced voices of personal and historical trauma.

Using this notion of fiction as a site of radical openness to an Other, Ms. Kogawa laid the foundations for her lecture, offered to the McGill University community as a whole. This lecture, called “Mercy In an Age of War,” drew upon both the legacy of the atomic bombs the American military dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1944, and on the biblical story of Abraham, who, commanded by God to sacrifice his son Isaac, willingly brings the boy to the appointed place and raises his knife to kill him. Seeing that Abraham is willing to dedicate his son’s life to his faith, God stays his hand, indicating instead a ram caught up in a bush nearby, which Abraham sacrifices in his son’s stead.

Ms. Kogawa forged a link between Nagasaki and Abraham through her strongly held religious conviction. The famous mistake made by the pilots who bombed Nagasaki, who missed their mark at the center of the city and instead dropped the bomb on Urakami Cathedral, just north of Nagasaki, allows Kogawa to set up one critique, both of writing and of God. The writing of history, which privileges the American military narrative that the bombing of Japan, in the long run, saved lives, silences the voices of the bomb’s victims. Kogawa extrapolated this paradigm of the cruel desire for obliteration of the Other to include the religious example of the vengeful God who demands the sacrifice of the innocent, Isaac.

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Dear Alumni and Friends,

The 2002-2003 academic year was a banner one for East Asian Studies at McGill University. Overall enrolments have never been higher, and growing number of students are pursuing Majors and Honours as well as graduate degrees. The contribution of new faculty members, Peter Button in Chinese Literature and Anne McKnight in Japanese Literature, has made all the difference in extending and refining our undergraduate and graduate programs. Moreover, in recognition of the increasing importance of East Asian Studies, the library has made additional efforts to build our CJK collection. We must also thank the Arts Undergraduate Society for their extremely generous contribution to our collection of Chinese, Korean and Japanese audio-visual materials.

The Centre sponsored a number of events over the past year. Professors Stephen Owen and Kathleen Ryor visited McGill as guest lecturers in the Paul Hsiang series on traditional Chinese poetry. The Japanese Film lecture series included speakers on Japanese war film, CGI in current Japanese cinema, and on new media in China and Japan. The Centre also had the opportunity to invite Joy Kogawa's participation in the McDonald-Currie Lecture series, in honour of the establishment of Asian Heritage Month in Canada.

I hope that all of you with an interest in East Asian Studies at McGill University will continue to follow our activities and to participate in them. You are welcome to join our listserve; simply write to the email address on the back of this newsletter.

Best regards,

Thomas Lamarre

Director, Centre for East Asian Research

Hsiang Lectures on Chinese Poetry

This year witnessed the continuation of the Hsiang Lectures on Chinese Poetry, endowed by Professor Paul Hsiang to encourage the study of classical Chinese poetry at the McGill Department of East Asian Studies. In fall, Professor Stephen Owen of Harvard University presented on "Eagle-Shooting Heroes and Wild-Goose Hunters: The Late Tang Moment," and in winter, Professor Kathleen Ryor of Rice University lectured on "Sensual Desires and Bodily Deprivations: Physicality in Xu Wei's (1521-1593) Flower Paintings and Poetry." Professors Owen and Ryor have each prepared their own abstracts of these fascinating lectures, which appear on page 3 of this newsletter.

In addition to lectures by Professors Owen and Ryor, the 2002-2003 school year brought about the publication, in summer, of the second *Hsiang Lectures in Chinese Poetry*, containing the full texts of three previous Hsiang talks at McGill. Professor Richard John Lynn of the University of Toronto, Professor Pauline Yu, Dean of Humanities at the University of California, Los Angeles, and Professor Zhang Hongsheng of Nanjing University, all contributed to this collection. The previous volume includes work by Professor Kang-i Sun Chang, of Yale University, Professor Shuen-fu Lin, of the University of Michigan, and Professor Grace Fong, of McGill.

Furthermore, we are pleased to announce a third Hsiang journal being prepared for printing during the summer of 2003, which will contain not only the works of Professors Owen and Ryor, abstracted to the right, but also a paper by Professor Nanxiu Qian of Rice University. To receive any of these three essay collections, please contact the Department of East Asian Studies at McGill University.



Paul Hsiang
(1915-2000)

HSIANG LECTURE SERIES ON CHINESE POETRY 2002-2003

“Eagle-Shooting Heroes and Wild-Goose Hunters: The Late Tang Moment”

Stephen Owen, Professor of Chinese and Comparative Literatures
Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures, Harvard University

“We like to conceive of Chinese poetry in terms of self-expression, whether the poet is simply reflecting on his own life or responding to larger concerns of state and society. Even before the Tang, however, we begin to see a competing view of poetry as a craft, a view that found its first mature instantiation in poets of the second quarter of the ninth century.

“The paper takes its title from a fragment of the preface to an anthology of 837, in which the poets represented are compared to “masters of eagle-shooting,” a height of skill rather than a depth of personal feeling. Their craft, which focused on the parallel couplet, was essentially anonymous; and the kind of poetry they created remained a model for learn-

ing poetic composition and a popular level of poetic practice for the next millennium.

“In striking contrast to the flamboyant poetic voices of the Yuanhe Reign (806-820), which preceded them, these poets of craft restrained salient personality and looked on poetry as an austere discipline, often suggesting analogies between the secular commitment to poetry and religious commitment to Buddhism. Several of these poets either were monks or had previously been monks, and they admired a tradition of poet-monks of the late eighth century. In contrast to the celebration of spontaneity in a Yuanhe poet like Bai Juyi, these poets,

the most famous being Jia Dao, valued spending time on poetry for the perfection of a single couplet or the choice of a single word.

“At its worst this poetry was a skill that was easy to master, like shooting slow, low-flying wild geese; and the dissemination of such a craft in later poetic pedagogy and its frequent repetition later in the tradition often gives such poems an anachronistic sense of banality. At its best, however, it was truly “eagle-shooting,” a striking finesse of words that cannot be easily achieved; and it represents one of the many, very different values and directions of Chinese classical poetry.” - Professor Stephen Owen.

“Sensual Desires and Bodily Deprivations:

Physicality in Xu Wei’s (1521-1593) Flower Paintings and Poetry”
Kathleen Ryor, Professor, Department of Art and Art History, Carleton University

“Literati flower and plant painting has almost exclusively been discussed in terms of the powers of these images to *symbolize* Confucian values or idealized feminine beauty.

“Flowers, fruit and other plants, however, also had a long history in Chinese culture as metaphors for various body parts that acted metonymically as images of the body and its functions.

“During the late Ming period, flower painting came to occupy an increasingly larger portion of literati artistic production. This paper explores the ways in which flowers and plants *represented* the body in the work of the late Ming artist Xu Wei (1521-1593). It concentrates on how Xu images the body, both his own and others', on two different levels in his paintings of flowers and plants.

“In contrast to earlier sixteenth century literati poet-painters, the work of Xu Wei expresses the late Ming environment of flesh and bodily appetites. Moreover, Xu's flower poems and paintings also reflect his own lived bodily experience as someone who mutilated himself in an insane fit, his serious study of the *Huangdi nei-jing su wen*, the most influential text in Chinese medical theory, and his lifelong interest in the martial arts.

“An analysis of the inscribed poetry on, as well as the style of, his paintings reveals a complex interaction between Xu's somatic manifestation through text and image and imagery that resonated with all manner of physical desires of his audiences.”
-Professor Kathleen Ryor.



A representative flower painting selected by Professor Ryor from Xu Wei's works, collected in *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, ed. Richard Barnhart et al., Yale University Press, 2002.

“MERCY IN AN AGE OF WAR”

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Also mentioned is the historical example of the pilot, who transformed a site of religious faith into ground zero with the dropping of the second and last atom bomb. These three atrocities, literary, religious, and historical, share a desire for the negation of the Other.

In opposition to these three sites of violence is Ms. Kogawa's radical interpretation of mercy. Mercy, as she foreshadowed in her earlier seminar, can be found in fiction-writing, which, for Ms. Kogawa, is an act of self-effacement and humility. Just as fiction provides a potential answer to the oppression of historical narratives, so too are there alternatives to the martial atrocities of the atom bombs and the religious atrocities of required filial sacrifice.

Mercy can be found in the acts of Father Zabelka, the Catholic chaplain who prayed over each atom bomb, asking God to grant them speed and efficacy. Father Zabelka later made a pilgrimage to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, speaking out strongly against war, and asking the bomb's victims to grant him forgiveness for his crimes.

Finally, there is religious mercy in another face of God, embodied, for Kogawa, in the Mahayana bodhisattva of mercy, Kuan Yin. Kuan Yin is the name Kogawa gives to the ram that offers up its life in place of Isaac's in the parable of Abraham's near-sacrifice.

Ms. Kogawa's strong religious conviction not only informs her subject matter, but moreover, it confers upon her, as an author, a positive responsibility to grapple with the atrocities of the modern era. In "Mercy In an Age of War," she explained not only the logic of her writing, but also its ethical imperative, demonstrating not only its dangers, in the potential of historical Truth to silence victims, but also its rewards, in the potential of fiction to return to those silenced the voices of which they have been robbed. The Centre of East Asian Studies would like to express its gratitude to Ms. Kogawa for her moving and heartfelt lecture.

KOREAN NIGHT 2003



Thanks to the untiring efforts of Professor Myunghee Kim and all of her Korean language students, Chae Wha Lee, the President of the Montreal Korean Community, Kwang Soo Han and Angela Song, Korean Dance instructors, and many others, McGill's annual Korean Cultural Night, held on Friday, April 3rd, 2003, was, once again, a roaring success. The event, which involves both a feast of Korean foods and a series of performances and presentations by members of Montreal's Korean community and by McGill students, is meant to draw together University members and Montreal residents to celebrate Korean culture.

The program began with a Mask Dance performed under the direction of Professor Kim, and was followed by speeches by the Chair of the Department of East Asian Studies, Professor Thomas Lamarre, and the Consul General of the Korean Consulate in Montreal, Jong-Moo Choi. The evening continued with a musical performance, a theatrical presentation of "Princess Pyongang and Ondal the Fool," a vocal duet, an always popular fan dance, and a closing address by this year's coordinator, Janice Joo.

On Friday, April 4th, following Korean Cultural Night, Ambassador Ki-ho Chang from the Embassy of Korea in Canada concluded the festivities with a more serious discussion of "Current Developments on the Korean Peninsula." He focused his timely and pertinent remarks on the new South Korean administration, on nuclear arms, and on the current state of North and South Korean relations.

GRADUATE STUDENT LECTURES 2003

The McGill Department of East Asian Studies graduate students, displaying their customary initiative and intellectual vigour, organized a series of lectures in March and April of 2003. Their presentations, held at the Thompson House Graduate Student Lounge, were met with enthusiastic receptions by their peers.

Ms. Li Xiaorong, the first presenter, lectured on March 14th, 2003, on "Engendering Heroism: Ming-Qing Women's Song Lyrics to the Tune *Man jiang hong*."

Mr. Hasan Karrar followed her

discussion on March 21st, 2003, with "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and China's Central Asian Security Concerns Since 1991."

After a pause for the AAS annual meeting in New York, Ms. Naomi Chiku, on April 4th, 2003, gave a presentation entitled, "Murakami Haruki's Kafka on the Shore: A Poetic Projection of a New Beginning."

Mr. Bryce Kushnier offered the penultimate lecture, "A Short History of Japanese Denshi Ongaku,"

on April 11th, 2003.

Mr. Alvin Chung concluded the series on April 18th, 2003, with a discussion of "Research Notes on the History of Chinese Naval Warfare during the Song Dynasty (960-1279 CE) as described in the *Comprehensive Essentials of Military Classics (Wujing Zongyao)*."

The success of this lecture series is a tribute both to the seriousness with which these McGill students approach their professional development, and also to the intellectual merit of their researches into their chosen fields.

Chinese Speech Contest March 22nd, 2003

In this year's 8th Annual Chinese Speech Contest, McGill's East Asian Studies students placed exceptionally well, winning first prize in every category. The following McGill students received awards:

First Level:

Daniel Suss, First Prize
Ayako Komine, Second Prize
Grace Seybold, Third Prize

Second Level:

Kim Scarrow, First Prize
Hee Ryong Jang, Third Prize

Third Level:

Huu Bac Quac, First Prize
David Stern, Second Prize

Fourth Level:

Michael Kalin, First Prize
Jean-Sebastien Goyette, Third Prize

The Centre for East Asian Research would like to extend its gratitude to the Education Office of the Chinese Embassy for making this event possible.

Japanese Speech Contest March 15th, 2003

McGill students also placed well in the 14th Annual Japanese Language Speech Contest of Quebec. The following McGill students placed highly.

Beginners Category:

Anna Tieu, First Prize
Annie Jacques, Third Prize
Caleb Netting, Special Prize

Intermediates Category:

Frances Chieh Chen, Third Prize
Fanie-Lois Dubreuil, Special Prize

Advanced Category:

Yun-Kyung Lee, Second Prize
Giancarla Unser-Shutz, Third Prize

Open Category:

Lisa Mallin, First Prize
J. Sebastien Goode, Second Prize

The Centre for East Asian Research would like to thank the Japan Foundation and the Japanese Consulate for their continued support of the Japanese Speech Contest. Without their assistance, this event would not have been possible.

McGill University's Speakers in East Asian Studies 2002-2003

<p><u>Professor Stephen Owen</u>, Departments of Chinese and Comparative Literature, Harvard University <i>Hsiang Lecture</i> “<i>Eagle-Shooting Heroes and Wild-Goose Hunters: The Late Tang Moment</i>”</p>	<p>October 11th, 2002</p>
<p><u>Mr. Michael Raine</u>, Department of Communications, University of Iowa <i>Lecture</i> “<i>Monumentalism and Mechanization in ‘The War at Sea from Hawaii to Malaysia’</i>”</p>	<p>October 22nd, 2002</p>
<p><u>Professor Anne McKnight</u>, Department of East Asian Studies, McGill University <i>Japan Seminar of Montreal</i> “<i>Poison, Independence, Reading: Nakagami Kenji’s Rhetorical Activism and the Subject of Discrimination in the 1970s</i>”</p>	<p>November 13th, 2002</p>
<p><u>Professor Masato Kimura</u>, Research Director, Ryumonsha Shibusawa Eiichi Memorial Foundation, Tokyo <i>Lecture</i> “<i>Rebuilding Japan: The Legacy of Shibusawa Eiichi (1840-1931)</i>”</p>	<p>November 22nd, 2002</p>
<p><u>Professor James Wilkerson</u>, Department of Anthropology, National Tsing-hua University in Taiwan <i>Seminar</i> “<i>Poetry in Motion: Description, Analysis and Comparison of Hmong-Mien Kinship Terminologies in Guangxi Self-Governing Region, People’s Republic of China</i>”</p>	<p>November 25th, 2002</p>
<p><u>Dr. Yolanda Munhoz</u>, Coordinator, Centre of Information and Documentation on Japan, El Colegio de Mexico <i>Lecture</i> “<i>Keeping the Ainu Moshir Alive: The Ainu Struggle For Recognition as Indigenous People of Japan</i>”</p>	<p>January 13th, 2003</p>
<p><u>Dr. Janet Theiss</u>, Department of History, University of Utah <i>Lecture</i> “<i>A Slandered Woman Gets Revenge: How Chastity Trumps Patriarchy in 18th Century China</i>”</p>	<p>January 17th, 2003</p>
<p><u>Dr. Margaret Kuo</u>, Department of History, University of California, Los Angeles <i>Lecture</i> “<i>Gender Equality and the Foundations of Modern Chinese Family Law, 1900-1949</i>”</p>	<p>January 20th, 2003</p>
<p><u>Dr. Blaine Chiasson</u>, Department of History, McGill University <i>Lecture</i> “<i>This Land is My Land: Sino-Russian Conflicts Over Property in the Special Administrative District of the Three Northeastern Provinces of China, 1924-1928</i>”</p>	<p>January 28th, 2003</p>

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McGill University's Speakers in East Asian Studies 2002-2003 continued

<p><u>Dr. Pierre Asselin</u>, Assistant Professor, Kapiolani Community College <i>Lecture</i> <i>"The 'New Cold War History': Rethinking North Vietnamese-American Relations, 1968-1973"</i></p>	<p>February 11th, 2003</p>
<p><u>Professor Rodolphe de Koninck</u>, Senior Canada Research Chair of Asian Studies, University of Montreal <i>Lecture</i> <i>"Les Périls de la Transition Agraire Dans Le Sud-Est Asiatique"</i></p>	<p>February 13th, 2003</p>
<p><u>Professor Sandra Hyde</u>, Departments of Anthropology and Medicine <i>Lecture</i> <i>"Borders, Diseases, and the Tai Imaginary: The Rise of HIV/AIDS in Southwest China"</i></p>	<p>March 7th, 2003</p>
<p><u>Professor Livia Monnet</u>, Department of Comparative Literature, University of Montreal <i>Lecture</i> <i>"Cyberpunk & Feminism"</i></p>	<p>March 10th, 2003</p>
<p><u>Dr. Liu Zhiwei</u>, Chair, Department of History, Zhongshan University <i>Seminar</i> <i>"Research on the Cultural History of the Pearl River Delta"</i></p>	<p>March 12th, 2003</p>
<p><u>Professor Ching Maybo</u>, Department of History, Zhongshan University <i>Seminar</i> <i>"Nature-Painting in 19th Century China"</i></p>	<p>March 14th, 2003</p>
<p><u>Professor Victor Hori</u>, Professor, Faculty of Religious Studies <i>Japan Seminar of Montreal</i> <i>"The Capping Phrase in Zen Koan Practice"</i></p>	<p>April 4th, 2003</p>
<p><u>Mr. Chang Ki-ho</u>, Korean Ambassador to Canada <i>Lecture</i> <i>"Current Developments in the Korean Peninsula"</i></p>	<p>April 7th, 2003</p>
<p><u>Ms. Joy Kogawa</u>, Novelist <i>Seminar</i> <i>"'The Rain Ascends' and 'Obasan'"</i> <i>McDonald-Currie Lecture, Faculty of Arts</i> <i>"Mercy In an Age of War"</i></p>	<p>April 8th, 2003 April 11th, 2003</p>
<p><u>Professor Timothy Murray</u>, Departments of Comparative Literature and English, Cornell University <i>Lecture</i> <i>"New Media Art In an Age of Surveillance: From Asia to Canada"</i></p>	<p>April 11th, 2003</p>



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