

Department of English



INKLINGS

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance"

CHINESE IMPRESSIONS

Dr. Nicholas Ruddick



Dr. Ruddick with Pudong skyline, Shanghai

I spent two weeks in October at China Jiliang University in Hangzhou. How to sum up my impressions?

China today is too vast and complex a phenomenon to lend itself to easy summary. Still, what's

happening there may well be the most extraordinary phenomenon in the contemporary world. China has the same area as the USA but has four times the population, a civilization twenty times older, and an economy that is likely soon to become the world's largest. The country is in the throes of a single-generation transition from the Middle Ages to the Near Future. It's undergoing a socio-cultural revolution as radical and almost as disconcerting as the one it endured from 1966-76. China today has to be seen to be believed.

Hangzhou, with a population of 6.2 million, is only the thirteenth largest city in China. My Chinese students laughed in disbelief when I told them that if Hangzhou were in Canada it would be the largest city, and that Zhejiang, the province of which Hangzhou is the capital, which is about one-sixth the size of Saskatchewan, has 20 million more people than the whole of Canada. Hangzhou is a vast sprawl, with several high-rise exurbs; by car, it takes two hours to drive through fearsome traffic from its western to its eastern extremity. But Hangzhou also encompasses at its heart the pagodas, tea houses, and lotus flowers of West Lake, the quintessential China of the world's imagination.

The Xiasha Higher Education Zone in eastern Hangzhou, 34 square kilometres in extent, contains no less than 14 universities, relocated there to purpose-built campuses a

decade ago. As Chinese undergraduates almost all live in residences on or close to campus, the Zone is home to about 200,000 students—a university city, with the local supermarkets, smart phone providers, fast food outlets, discount jeans stores, and laundromats that students everywhere need. A brand new subway line connects the Zone to downtown in about forty minutes.

Specialization based on market need explains the proliferation of universities in the Zone: China Jiliang University is the national leader in metrology. But with 20,000 students, CJU also has a fair-sized English program. Currently in its College of Foreign Languages there are 400 English majors and 320 Chinese Teaching majors, the latter of whom are learning to teach Mandarin to students who understand English. My task was to lecture to these 720 students, broken into groups of 30-60, as frequently as possible. The chief aim of my visit was to expose them to "University English" in its broadest sense. I gave nineteen lectures, each about 95 minutes long, in ten days.

"Foreign languages" at CJU means English. China is investing heavily in English language skills. Mandarin is unlikely ever to be the language of international commerce as it is too difficult for most foreigners to master. As China is interested in expanding both its global trade and the "soft power" that comes from effectively disseminating its cultural dynamism, the English language may be China's greatest market need. English is now seen and heard everywhere in urban China: on road signs, on subway trains, in airports, on the CCTV News Network. On the bullet train that can cover the 170 km between Hangzhou and Shanghai in 45 minutes at a maximum 304 kph, announcements over the PA system are in both Mandarin and English.

My students at CJU (about fifteen females for every male) were shy, but could be charmed into asking questions. Their comprehension varied from excellent to rudimentary, with most somewhere in between. The majority laughed politely at my silly jokes. In 2007 I had lectured to a rapt student audience in Xiamen about life at a Canadian university. They had gasped with admiration when I showed

slides of the new U of R residences, gyms, and weight room. In 2013 CJU students were not at all impressed by our facilities, now matched by their own. Still, they were disappointed to find that it would cost at least \$26,000 to spend two semesters in Regina to improve their English, a sum beyond the resources of most.

In China, however, money will always be found for top quality goods. The crowded malls on Hangzhou's main downtown shopping street recite the litany of luxury global brands, from Armani to YSL. Just off the strip, Rolls-Royce and Lamborghini dealerships are neighbours. In academia, the Chinese affinity for quality has generated the annual ARWU "Shanghai" ranking of world universities based on research success. ARWU has more credibility than most such rankings if only because not one Chinese University has yet made it into its top 100, and in China ARWU is taken very seriously. Of the four Canadian universities in that 100, only the University of Toronto and UBC hold secure positions in the top half. If the cost to a visa student of a university education in Canada continues to bear no relation to the perceived quality of the institution offering it, Toronto and Vancouver will soon be the sole Canadian destinations of students from China.

On the flight from Beijing to Vancouver, I found myself sitting next to a Chinese girl eager to make conversation. She proved to be only fifteen years old, and was heading alone to a high school in the Fraser Valley, BC for three years. Her parents were not rich, but she was their only child, and the pollution in Harbin was affecting her health, so money was somehow found to send her to BC. She was relieved to hear from a professor that her English was already quite serviceable, and she quickly grew in confidence and fluency. She could not hide her sadness at leaving her extended family for a new life in an unknown country, yet on the whole she was remarkably self-possessed for one so young, and upbeat about the future. She seemed to me to embody everything positive about the spirit of contemporary China, and I hoped that Canada would not disappoint her.



Lotus pond on West Lake, Hangzhou

CREATIVE WRITING OPEN HOUSE

- Gerry Hill

The Department of English and Luther College hosted the 2nd annual Creative Writing Open House at Luther on Saturday, November 9. Purposes: information, inspiration, collegiality, and a touch of recruitment potential. Profs Battis, Hill, Hillabold, Purdham, Schnell, Trussler, and Wall delivered short talks that afternoon and, in the evening, shared the open mic spotlight (more a dull overhead glow) with eight other willing souls named Adair, Blackett, Brown, Loeppky, Morenstein, Rivera, Stephenson, and Stoudt. Prof Hill had to finally kick them all out, the good cheer carried on so long. "2nd annual" is not the official designation of the event, but we all had fun and, I'm guessing, would do it again next year.

ORLENE MURAD ACADEMIC DISCUSSIONS

-Bev Montague

Dr. Jes Battis opened the Fall 2013 Orlene Murad Academic Discussions on October 11 with a talk entitled "'Tis No Crime to be Bashful': Tracing Social Anxiety, from the Duchess of Newcastle to Dr. Sheldon Cooper."

On November 15, Dr. Alexis McQuigge, the newest member of the English Department, presented a paper, "'They Give No Cordials to Heighten the Fever': Lady Mary's *Letters*, the College and Inoculation."

Both talks were followed by a reception.

RETIRED FACULTY NEWS

Nils Clausson was awarded Instructor Emeritus and will likely be seen around the department soon.

Joan Givner has written a second book titled *The Hills Are Shadows* in the series *A Girl Called Tennyson* which will be published in 2014.

Jeanne Shami and **Ken Mitchell** spent another five weeks in Oxford this summer –Jeanne, completing some research in Oxford's libraries, and Ken, regaling patrons of the Isis Farmhouse (tavern) with cowboy poetry and culture. Jeanne returned to take up a sessional teaching assignment for the Department (co-taught with alumna **Kate Cushon**) while Ken's play *Edna Jacques Live* (a one-person show starring U of R alumna **Michelle Sereda**, and directed by **Kelly Handerek** of the Theatre Department) ran successfully for three nights at the Artesian on 13th Ave. This year, Jeanne published two book chapters: the first was a piece co-written with **Mary Blackstone**: "Donne, Shakespeare, and the Interrogative Conscience," in *Shakespeare and Donne: Generic Hybrids and the Cultural Imaginary*. Ed. Judith H. Anderson and Jennifer Vaught. New York: Fordham UP, 2013, 85-110. The second essay is entitled "Reading

Funeral Sermons for Early Modern English Women: Some Literary and Historiographical Challenges" in *Religious Diversity and Early Modern English Texts*. Ed. Arthur Marotti and Chanita Goodblatt. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2013, 282-308. Jeanne and **Anne James** (with collaborators Jon Bath and Brent Nelson of the University of Saskatchewan) also submitted an application to SSHRC's Insight Grants program to create and populate an open-access fully-searchable database of English manuscript sermons 1530-1715 using both traditional and group-sourcing methodologies. More on that later, we hope.

UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS

The following Undergraduate students have won scholarships:

Credence McFadzean, L.G. Crossman Scholarship; Torville Honours Scholarship; Lloyd Person Scholarship

Haley Bolen, Leslie A. Dybvig Scholarship, Torville Undergraduate Scholarship

Sonia Stanger, Goldman Undergraduate Award in English, Torvill Honours Scholarship, The Eugene Dawson Award

Harmony Landgraf, Torville Undergraduate Scholarship, Royal Society of St. George

Justin Malone, Torville Undergraduate Scholarship

Paige Moreside, Torville Undergraduate Scholarship

Adam Wiebe, Ethel Toupin Memorial Scholarship

Warmest congratulations to all of these award-winning students!

NEWS OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

M.A. student **Courtney Bates** is going to have a chapbook published by JackPine Press on December 1st. The chapbook is called *Sea Foam* and she worked with Regina artist (and fellow U of R alumni) Faith B. Logan to create it. The chapbook includes seven of her poems on mermaid mythology enriched with hand-carved, stamped illustrations by Faith. It will be available for purchase on their website (<http://www.jackpinepress.com/>) and anywhere that she does a reading in the future.

Courtney also received the Dorothy and Leon Goldman Award in English this month! Very exciting!

Now in the second year of her Special Case PhD program, this fall **Colleen Biro** was awarded two Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity Scholarships. The first matched the Dr. Morris Shumiatcher Graduate Scholarship in English she won early in 2013, and the second was for innovation and excellence in a graduate program, totaling \$16,500.

WELCOME TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



NEWS OF FACULTY

Marcel DeCoste September saw the publication in the journal *Religion and Literature* (Summer, 2012, 67-91) of Marcel DeCoste's essay, "A Thing that Even Death Cannot Undo": The Operation of the Theological Virtues in Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*".

Jean Hillbold's recent & forthcoming publications include a non-fiction article "The Vampire Cult of Eternal Youth," in an anthology, *The Vampire Goes to College: Essays on Teaching with the Undead* (McFarland Press, Jan. 2014). Under her pen name Jean Roberta, two short stories appear, the first, "Faith," in *Best Lesbian Romance 2014*, edited by Radclyffe (Cleis Press) as well as "Tears from Heaven," in *She Who Must Be Obeyed*, edited by D.L. King (Lethe Press), an anthology of erotica about Dominant women. The short story, "A Well-Placed Pinch," appears in *Shakespeareotica: Queering the Bard*, edited by Salome Wilde (Storm Moon Press).

Congratulations to **Christian Riegel** who was re-appointed Director of Humanities Research Institute for a three-year term.

Cindy MacKenzie's chapter, "Dickinson's Letters Archive" is now published in *Emily Dickinson in Context*, Cambridge University Press, 2013. Cindy has been granted a six-month sabbatical leave beginning July 1, 2014.

Medrie Purdham and **Michael Trussler** were each awarded a year's sabbatical leave.

News to be included in the next issue of *Inklings* is due October 15, 2013.

PLEASE FORWARD YOUR NEWS TO:

Cindy MacKenzie, Editor

cindy.mackenzie@uregina.ca

INKLINGS

3737 Wascana Parkway

Department of English, AH 313

University of Regina

Regina, SK S4S 0A2



**ORLENE MURAD
ACADEMIC DISCUSSIONS
WINTER 2014**

January 31, 2014

Jean Hillabold

**"The Muse Was a
Leather Daddy."**

February 28, 2014

Michael Trussler

**"In Search of
Etty Hillesum"**

3:30 PM in Ad. Hum 348

Reception to follow

Everyone is welcome!

