

IN MEMORIAM JOSIANE PACCAUD-HUGUET (1953-2023)

Veronique Pauly

Josiane Paccaud-Huguet passed away on September 6, 2023, aged 69. She was an important figure in the world of Conradian scholarship, both in France and internationally who brought fresh, thought-provoking new perspectives to bear on Conrad's *oeuvre*, as well on such authors as Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield, D. H. Lawrence, Malcom Lowry, Claude Simon, Will Self, or Pascal Guignard.

Josiane Paccaud-Huguet was Professor of English Modern literature at the University Lumière-Lyon 2. She was also, successively, Head of the Department of Anglophone Studies, Dean of the Faculty of Languages, and President of the *Société Conradienne Française*.

She wrote her doctoral thesis, in 1986, on *Under Western Eyes*, analysed from a linguistic perspective. This initial interest in language, and in its power to constraint and liberate, led her to turn to Lacanian psychoanalytical theory and to take up a seminar on Lacan at the University Lumière-Lyon 2 also became a practising psychoanalyst after retirement. Her analyses of the circulation and reverberations of the signifier in Conrad's novels and stories, in particular, conjoining aesthetics, politics and ethics, illuminated imaginary identifications and the hollowness of the words of political mastery; as in this article on "Karain" in which she wrote: "(t)he power of the signifier consists in the fact that it both creates a world – a visual motif – and makes it vacillate by the sheer power of the written word: the wound – another word for trauma – in the fabric reveals the void behind" ("The 'Obscure Odyssey' of the Object in Conrad's 'Karain,'" FATHOM [Online], 6, 2019).

Josiane Paccaud-Huguet's publications are extensive, both in book form, and as contributions to all the major scholarly journals on Conrad. She greatly contributed to the posterity of Conrad in France. In 2014, with her friend and fellow eminent Conradian, Claude Maisonnat, she edited the *Cahier de l'Herne* on Conrad, a prestigious collection devoted to the great names in literature, poetry and philosophy. She also edited *Conrad in France* (Marie Curie-Skłodowska University 2006), and, launching a new collection of critical essays on Conrad (Minard Editions), she welcomed younger Conradians; she supervised numerous doctoral theses, tirelessly organised conferences, and was always, for all, a benevolent tutelary figure.

In one of her last papers on Conrad, Josiane quoted Claude Simon, choosing one of those "fragments of the sensible stuff," to be found in his novel *Le Tramway*:

As if something more than the summer were endlessly agonizing in the stifling, motionless air, where the suspended veil which no breath of wind drew away seemed to float, falling slowly,

covering with its uniform pall the thick laurel trees, the sunburnt lawns, the faded irises and the pool of rotten water, under an impalpable layer of ashes, the impalpable and protective mist of memory. ("Conrad's Presence in Contemporary French Culture," *Conrad's Presence in Contemporary Culture. Adaptations and Appropriations*, Brill, forthcoming)

As we read this, after Josiane's decease, this evocation of loss, mourning and memory takes on a new significance. By choosing to borrow Jacques Rancière's concept of "le partage du sensible the sharing" – and distributing of sensible experience – in her study of Conrad's posterity, Josiane illustrates the extent to which a scholar's choices, of research objects and theoretical tools, say something about the scholar's personality and take on life. Josiane's sense of sharing, her commitment to transmission are all there, in a practice of research which was never severed from "the fabric of human experience." Several Conradians, in France and abroad, cherish the memory of the 2003 ten-day symposium at Cerisy-La-Salle that she and Claude Maisonnat had organised and during which the day's papers and discussions were followed by friendly moments in the attic of the mansion, sharing songs, readings, laughter and a few bottles of wine. Josiane was a mandolinist, she was a great scholar, she was a *passeur*, a mother and grand-mother, a wonderful human being. She will be greatly missed.