

CALL FOR PAPERS

ESSE 2014 in Kosice

Conrad seminar

“The unexpected in Joseph Conrad’s fiction”

« It is always the unexpected that happens, » Marlow muses in *Lord Jim*. In Conrad’s texts, the encounter with the unexpected is at least disruptive, often traumatic. A trivial object, an insignificant event or character crops up, and the course of reality is undone. The symbolic order is shaken at its roots, the semblances we live by vacillate, the truth is glimpsed. One occurrence of the unexpected won’t make the protagonist wiser for the next occurrence, however, for there is no ready-made answer: which brings forth the issue of responsibility in terms of the subject’s radical choices.

How does Conrad’s fiction deal with the contingent, the disruptive, the traumatic? what responses – ethical, political, aesthetic? If we follow Giorgio Agamben’s argument that the contemporary writer is the one who always takes us by surprise, how does Conrad remain our contemporary in this respect? Papers dealing with these or related issues from various theoretical angles will be welcomed.

Abstracts (300 words) should be sent before February 28th, to: Josiane Paccaud-Huguet (josiane.paccaud-huguet@univ-lyon2.fr) and Claude Maisonnat (claudemaisonnat@univ-lyon2.fr)