

Making Visible: Conrad, Poland, and World Literature

Special Session MLA25 New Orleans

This year is the centenary of Joseph Conrad's death, and his legacy and continuing relevance extend across Anglophone literary discourses into the broader realms of World Literature. But many of Conrad's texts remain famously surreptitious – or cannily suggest new modes of cultural consciousness and exchange. As with so many of his often-veiled characters and peoples, Conrad's narratives press different cultural or national outlooks into the open, or they critique the social and literary systems by which individuals or traditions might otherwise remain cached. In this regard, texts such as *Lord Jim*, *Nostramo*, *Under Western Eyes* or *The Rescue* provide characters and scenarios wherein human alterities and cultural differences are made visible, or in which they emerge into new discursive spaces. This MLA Special Session proposal seeks papers addressing the discourses of visibility and invisibility in Conrad's works, not least his own troubled relationship to Poland and Polishness, but also in a world literary framework whereby his fictions open unexpected conduits of exchange across national, ethnic, or linguistic lines. Topics might include Conrad's fiction-based legacy in South East Asia, the cross-cultural mosaic of *Nostramo*, or the coded manner in which that author's national heritage inflects his texts.

Send 250 word panel paper proposals and a brief CV by March 16th 2024
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