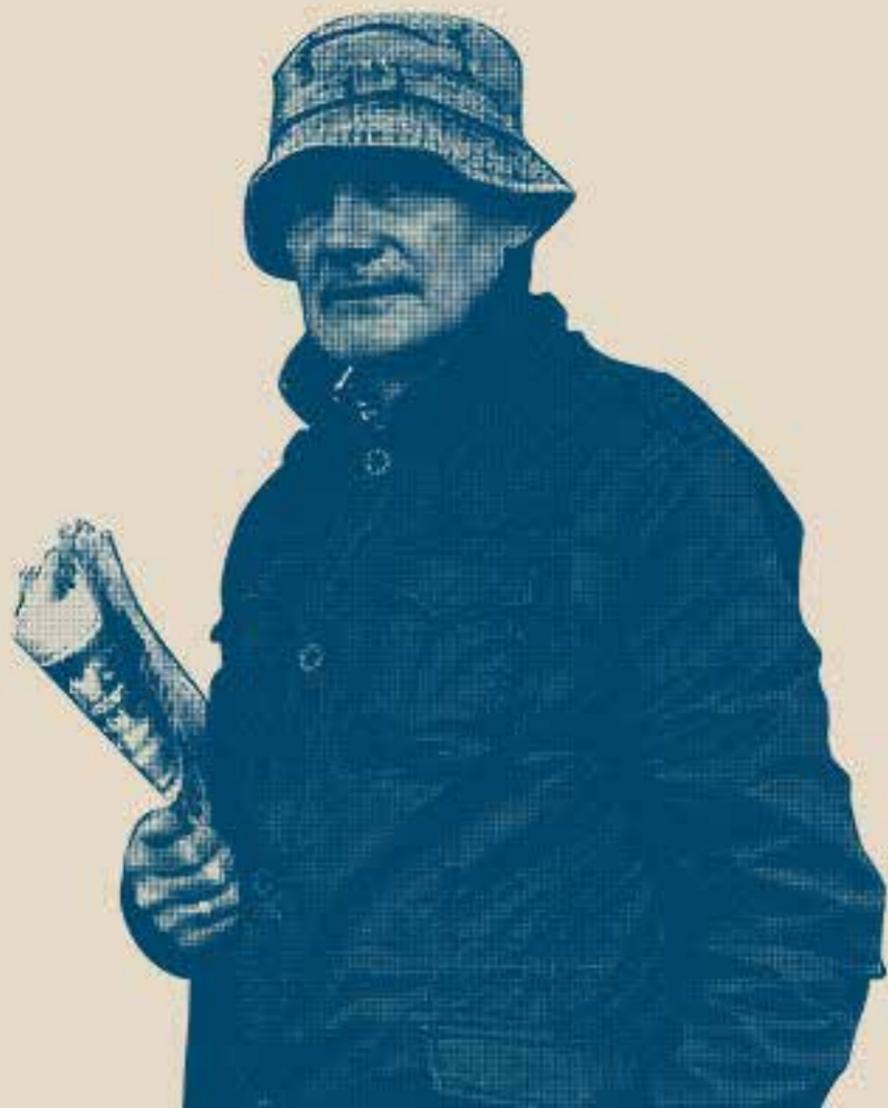


CONRAD
IN THE MAKING



CONRAD
ON TRIAL

JJ Sandras



***Conrad in the Making** is a simplified partial biography of a young man beginning with his childhood in Johannesburg and ending when he is twenty-three years old in the Punjab. It describes the events in his life which converted him from a typical South African Protestant to a follower of the Buddhist philosophy corresponding to Christ's message.*

The story begins with his experiences in Southern Africa as a child, schoolboy and young man until the age of nineteen. In 1967 during 9 months he meets interesting people while visiting various countries in Western Europe and especially while working in London. Back in Johannesburg he undergoes an existential crisis under pleasant conditions resulting in travelling again in 1970. He lives for 3 months on a kibbutz in Israel, visits Greece for a month and finally reaches India where he meets a mystic who enlightens him.

The author's description of his search for the meaning of life is a happy one. It can be read with pleasure by old and young alike.

***Conrad on Trial** is an imaginary court case describing Conrad's state of mind after some fifty years of trying to live according to what he learnt in India in 1971.*

Jean-Jacques Sandras was born in 1947. He grew up in South Africa. He began to travel widely at the age of 19 and has lived on several continents. He draws upon his experiences in foreign lands when describing the why and wherefore of our passage on this earth.

CONRAD IN THE MAKING & CONRAD ON TRIAL

JJ SANDRAS

Conrad
in the Making
&
Conrad
on Trial

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

BOOKS IN ENGLISH:

The Lord Magicians, Yvelinédition, 2019, is a philosophical trilogy on mysticism written as a fantasy tale with the background of France in the Middle Ages.

volume 1: *The Knight of the Flower*,

volume 2: *The Lady of Noble Love*,

volume 3: *The Knight of the Boar*,

Conrad & Alice

An elderly pensioner and a young psychologist as crime investigators.

episode 1: *Conrad & Alice and the mad murder*.

episode 2: *Conrad & Alice and the anti-speciesism murder*.

episodes 1&2, Yvelinédition, 2016.

episode 3: *Conrad & Alice and the old age murder*.

episode 4: *Conrad & Alice and the human rights murder*.

episodes 3&4, Yvelinédition, 2017.

episode 5: *Conrad & Alice and the ecology murder*.

episode 6: *Conrad & Alice and the space-time bubble murder*.

episodes 5&6, Yvelinédition, 2018.

episode 7: *Conrad & Alice and the globalization murder*.

episode 8: *Conrad & Alice and the kaleidoscope murder*.

episodes 7&8, Yvelinédition, 2019.

The Magic Flute, Yvelinédition, 2017, is a fairy tale written in 1985 for my daughter, Fleur, when she was 9 years old and can be considered as a preliminary exercise a year before the fantasy tale, 'The Knight of the Flower' written in 1986 and published in French under the title 'le Chevalier à la Fleur' in 2001.

BOOKS IN FRENCH:

Le Chevalier à la Fleur, éditions Déjà, 2001.

Roman philosophique et mystique écrit à la manière d'un conte fantastique sur fond de Moyen-Âge en France.

Les Seigneurs Magiciens, éditions Clair de terre, 2005.

Bande dessinée inspirée du roman *Le Chevalier à la Fleur*.

Guy Marais, détective privé

Les mésaventures comiques d'un détective privé sud-africain à Paris.

1 *Les clients mortels*, Yvelinédition, 2010.

2 *L'or de la mort*, Yvelinédition, 2010.

3 *Association mortelle de malfaiteurs*, Yvelinédition, 2011.

4 *Crime fatal en bande désorganisée*, Yvelinédition, 2011.

5 *Homicide volontaire en flagrant délire*, Yvelinédition, 2012.

6 *Non-assistance à personne enragée*, Yvelinédition, 2012.

7 *Entrave stupéfiante à la justice*, Yvelinédition, 2013.

8 *Erreur fatale sur la personne*, Yvelinédition, 2014.

9 *Mystère et cupidité au musée du Louvre*, Yvelinédition, 2015.

10 *La fin du 36, quai des Orfèvres*, Yvelinédition, 2016.

Bandes dessinées tirées des romans du même titre:

1 *L'Or de la mort*, Yvelinédition, 2015.

2 *Mystère et cupidité au musée du Louvre*, Yvelinédition, 2016.

Conrad on Trial

To those who have read 'Conrad in the Making'.

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CHAPTER 1

SUMMONS TO COURT

Conrad was a happy taxpayer on pension in his seventies. Life had treated him well and his health, physical, mental and pecuniary, was good. Nowadays he spent his time pleasantly meeting people in cafés, taking long walks in the woods with friends and playing chess at the club. He liked reading books and took pleasure watching major sport events on television and sometimes he went to the stadiums. Christmas was spent with his family and New Year with friends in the country.

Our story begins with someone knocking on Conrad's door. Upon opening his door Conrad smiled at the postman who gave him a registered-letter and a paper to sign. Conrad signed the paper thereby acknowledging reception of the official missive and gave the paper back to the postman. They wished each other a pleasant day and the postman left.

Conrad opened the letter and was surprised to read the summons to report to a branch of the New International Court of Justice. This reminded him of the International Court of Justice which was the principal judicial organ of the United Nations whose seat is at the Peace Palace in The Hague. The famous court began work in 1946 when it replaced the Permanent Court of International Justice which had functioned in the Peace Palace since 1922.

“Wow!” exclaimed Conrad. He sat down in the spacious sitting room of his apartment. He shook his head slowly trying to fathom out what crime he could have committed to deserve such a summons. ‘At least it wasn’t the police coming to arrest me with handcuffs,’ he mused. ‘So it can’t be that bad.’ He raised his eyebrows while lifting the letter to receive more light from the window. ‘Maybe someone is playing a joke on me,’ he said to himself. ‘This can’t be serious.’ He glanced over the main lines before reading the letter slowly and carefully. ‘If this is a joke,’ he was thinking, ‘it is in bad taste.’

He was accused of writing books instigating all sorts of dissention thereby inciting people to racism and intolerance. Various human rights and religious organisations had laid charges against him. If he didn’t report to the police station within a week following reception of the registered-letter the police would come and fetch him. ‘At least they allow me a week to run away,’ he thought. ‘Maybe some kind of hacker is trying to take over my apartment by frightening me to flee.’

Yet the letter looked like it really came from the famous international court of justice. Conrad decided to put his mind to rest. He photographed the letter with his

cell phone, created a new dossier calling it justice on his computer and put the photo in it. He sent the document via internet to a few people he knew well and could trust. Then folding the letter into one of his jacket’s pocket, he donned the jacket and went to the police station. The police officer who received him was just as surprised as Conrad about the issue and asked Conrad to wait in the waiting room while he consulted his computer. Several minutes later a uniformed policeman came to the waiting room and asked Conrad to follow him. They went into a small office occupied by two men in ordinary clothes. One was tall and thin with a lean face and shortly cropped black hair. The other was of average height with long curly light brown hair. What Conrad noticed was the closeness with which the tall man’s cold, blue eyes were set and that he only just escaped a squint. His nose was long and thin and his mouth was a slit due to very thin lips. The other man also had shifty eyes and his nose was full as well as his mouth. Here were men Conrad could neither like nor trust at first sight.

“Thank you,” said the tall man to the policeman who left the office while closing the door. “Do sit down,” said the tall man in a neutral voice.

Conrad sat on the chair facing the two men sitting on the other side of the desk. “I don’t understand why I got this summons,” said Conrad by way of making conversation because the two men remained silent while looking at him.

The tall man shrugged and his colleague raised his eyebrows.

“Really?” questioned Curly Hair. Because neither man had introduced himself Conrad decided to refer to them as Black Hair and Curly Hair.

Conrad shook his head with eyes wide open to express his confusion.

“You have been writing novels for many years,” said Curly Hair.

Conrad nodded. “So what?” he asked. “Is there a law against writing novels?” Conrad’s initial surprise was being replaced by annoyance and his voice showed it. “I don’t even know who you are.”

“No need to,” replied Black Hair in a stern voice.

“But why am I here?” insisted Conrad.

“Because you came,” was the curt reply.

“I came because of the registered-letter I received,” retorted Conrad gaining courage. “Not because I wanted to.” The situation was ludicrous. The two men facing him hadn’t smiled once. Their attitude led him to believe that he was looked upon as a criminal.

“Do you deny the fact that you have written many novels, twenty-three to be precise, over a period of some twenty years?” said Curly Hair in an unfriendly tone.

“To be precise,” replied Conrad, “the first one was written in 1985, the second in 1986 and the others between 2002 and 2019 because my second novel which was the first to be published appeared in 2001.” He raised his eyebrows in defiance. “Is there anything wrong with that?”

“That is not for us to decide,” said Curly Hair. “We only want to be sure that you are truly the author of

those novels.” So saying he handed Conrad a sheet of paper with the list of his novels with their publishing dates.

Conrad read the sheet carefully to make sure that it contained only information concerning his novels. Satisfied that this was the case he put the sheet back on the desk and nodded. He waited for the other two men to say something and when they remained silent he said: “so what?”

“You must sign this paper,” ordered Dark Hair pointing to the sheet.

“I don’t understand,” said Conrad in a surprised voice.

“Just sign,” insisted Dark Hair.

“If I don’t,” objected Conrad.

“You will be detained for refusing to cooperate with the police.”

“Put into prison?” asked Conrad in disbelief.

Dark Hair nodded and pointed to the sheet. Curly Hair nodded also. Conrad could hardly believe what was going on. The sheet had correct information concerning his novels so he signed the paper. Dark Hair pulled the sheet back to himself and put it into a folder.

“Now what?” asked Conrad.

“Go back to the waiting room and wait,” was the unfriendly reply.

Conrad realised that there was no point in trying to get kindness from his inquisitors so he got up and without so much as a word of good-bye he left the office and went back to the waiting room where he sat down and waited. He didn’t have to wait long. Several minutes later

the policeman in uniform came to fetch him. This time he was taken to a small room with no windows and only a chair for furniture. The policeman pointed to the wooden uncomfortable chair. Conrad understood the silent order and sat down. Then the policeman left the room closing the door behind him. Conrad found himself alone and in total darkness. He was about to protest when a light appeared on the wall in front of him. It was like being at the cinema. On the screen Conrad saw the paper he had signed concerning his novels. A metallic voice asked him if he recognised the image on the screen.

“Yes,” replied Conrad. “And who are you?”

“You are here to answer questions,” replied the metallic voice.

“Oh!” exclaimed Conrad trying to gain confidence. “You are a computer.”

“As you must know,” said the voice, “we live in a computerised world. You are the only human being in this conversation. Remember that so your trial will go on without problems.”

“Trial!” exclaimed Conrad. “I’m on trial!” He choked. “Why? What have I done?”

“You have acknowledged what is on the screen.”

“It’s just a list of the books I have written. What’s wrong with that?”

“You’ll see.”

“I don’t understand.”

“Please do not make things more difficult than necessary.”

Conrad smiled for the first time since having come to the police station. At least the computer was being polite. He shook his head with a wry smile. “What do you want me to do?” he asked.

“Just answer the questions.”

“How many questions?”

“It all depends upon how you answer. If your answers are short and precise there will be fewer questions. Are you ready now?”

“I suppose I am,” murmured Conrad.

“Speak up!” ordered the metallic voice in an unemotional tone.

Conrad grimaced. “I’m ready,” he said loudly.

“Do you admit to having written things insulting people thereby inciting them to public disobedience?”

“Certainly not!” exclaimed Conrad.

“Religion,” was the metallic reply. “What is your religion?”

Conrad frowned. A chill went down his back. Talking to human beings he was used to, but how was he to discuss delicate issues with a computer? “I grew up as a Protestant in South Africa,” he tried hoping that that would suffice.

“You believe that God decided that the Blacks should serve the Whites.”

“That is not true,” objected Conrad.

“In your churches you learnt that after the Flood while celebrating Noah was found drunk and naked by his son, Ham. Ham called his brothers to show his father’s shame. The brothers covered their father’s naked body

and when Noah became sober again he cursed Ham's children's children to be servants for his bothers' children's children."

Conrad raised his eyebrows in disbelief. The story was well and truly in the Old Testament. "But that's in the Bible," he shouted. "And that was written long before South Africa was occupied by the Europeans."

"No need to raise your voice," said the metallic voice always in the same unemotional tone.

"But why ask me about the Bible? I have never claimed to be a specialist in Christianity or any other religion."

"I'm asking you about apartheid." The computer let a few seconds go by before speaking again. "You justified the racist policy by saying that the Whites were Ham's brothers' children and the Blacks were Ham's children."

"I never said anything like that!" exclaimed Conrad in fury.

"No need to raise your voice," said the metallic voice again still in the same unemotional tone. "Shouting drains your energy."

"Very well," replied Conrad. "But stop accusing me of ridiculous things."

"I'm not accusing you of anything. I'm only trying to get the truth."

"Well, then," dared Conrad. "It's not true that I justified racism by the Bible."

"But you have Afrikaner ancestors," said the computer. "How did they justify apartheid?"

Conrad frowned. "With the Old Testament in the Bible," he said.

"Please, explain."

"The Afrikaners associated themselves with the Hebrew slaves in Egypt. The Exodus with Moses was compared to the Great Trek."

"The Great Trek?"

"Yes. When the British annexed the Dutch Cape Colony during the Napoleonic wars the people in the colony wanted to retain their freedom. They refused to be British subjects. So leaving the colony they trekked northwards to create their own independent country."

"Trekking?"

"Trek means pull in Dutch. It has become an international word because of the Great Trek in the eighteen thirties."

"Then they consider their migration to be like the Exodus in the Old Testament?"

"Yes. And furthermore the famous Blood River Battle on the 16th of December in 1838 when the Voortrekkers defeated the Zulus they consider to be like the Battle of Jericho when the Hebrews conquered their promised land."

"Voortrekkers?"

"Voortrekkers are the Afrikaners who undertook the migration northwards."

"Then are you saying that the Afrikaners won their promised land like the Hebrews?"

"Yes. The night before the Blood River Battle they prayed with the Bible and promised God that if they were to defeat the Zulus to gain their promised land they would never forget God's intervention. That is why the

16th of December was declared the Day of the Covenant. That public holiday was to remind them to thank God's for his help."

"But that day is the Day of Reconciliation."

"Thanks to Nelson Mandela. One of the best men South Africa has ever known."

"Please, explain."

"When Nelson Mandela was elected president of the Republic of South Africa he kept the 16th of December as a public holiday but instead of calling it the Day of the Covenant he renamed it to the Day of Reconciliation between all the peoples of South Africa. The Day of the Covenant was commonly called Dingaan's Day."

"Dingaan?"

"Dingaan was the Zulu chief who wanted to exterminate the Whites."

"Then you are saying that Nelson Mandela knew that the Afrikaners would still honour the 16th of December and he managed to get all South Africans to honour that date in order to avoid tension if only the Afrikaners honoured that day?"

"Yes. One can compare that to the Americans moving west as from the 1840's. The big difference is the Americans almost exterminated the indigenous population whereas the Afrikaners did nothing like that. The Australians also virtually eliminated the indigenous population to grab their land."

"Those comparisons are inappropriate and therefore will not be taken into account."

"Alright," agreed Conrad. "I shall be more careful with what I say."

"You grew up in South Africa and left the country permanently at the age of 26. Therefore you took advantage of apartheid during all that time."

Conrad was dumbfounded. "I don't understand," he said.

"When you were 19 years old you lived and worked in London. There you discovered that racism was wrong. You went back to South Africa and carried on living according to the racist laws."

Conrad didn't know what to say.

"Do you deny that?"

Conrad frowned.

"Kindly answer the question," insisted the computer. "Do you deny having continued to live according to the racist laws after discovering how wrong they were?"

"I suppose I can't."

"We require yes or no."

Conrad gulped. "No," he admitted. "But can I say something?"

"Yes. We are fair in this enquiry for your court case."

"At the time I discovered that apartheid was wrong I also discovered that America, Great Britain and France protected South Africa for political and economical reasons. If I am to be accused of supporting racism you have to also accuse the citizens of the major three human rights champion countries. Politically they wanted to keep the Soviet Union out of the Southern Hemisphere, strategically France wanted uranium from South Africa

for its atom bomb and economically the entire Free-World made a lot of money in South Africa due to gold and diamonds and cheap black labour.” Conrad smiled. “So what do you say to that?”

“Here and now we are concerned with you and only you.”

“How unfair!” exclaimed Conrad.

The computer remained silent.

“Apartheid only ended when Gorbachev dissolved the Soviet Union,” added Conrad. “The Russian Communist threat no longer existed. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 rang the knell for apartheid.” Conrad smiled. He was happy to point out the hypocrisy of the so-called Free-World. “Fortunately Nelson Mandela was there. He helped a lot to change the South African society peacefully.” Conrad grimaced. “Do you know that some 20 years after the end of apartheid many Blacks who had lived during that period said that apartheid was bad but what replaced it was worse?”

“Once again you are diverting from the issue at hand. It is your personal case that is on trial.”

“What is your conclusion then?” asked Conrad.

“As I have already told you,” replied the computer, “I do not judge you. I am only trying to gather evidence for the judges.”

Conrad’s face twisted into a wry smile. “Have we finished now?” he asked.

“No,” was the reply. “You claim that people are born in countries and in families according to the law of

karma. Thereby you justify the Blacks having bad conditions during the apartheid period in South Africa.”

“I did not invent the mystical philosophy of karma,” replied Conrad. “During my research for an explanation to life I discovered it.”

“But you use it to justify the fact that you accepted apartheid.”

“Although I believe in reincarnation and that we are born under circumstances according to our actions in our previous lives, I consider that to be unfair.”

“Explain.”

“Only if I were to remember my previous lives and could see how my actions in this present life could affect my future lives would I consider the law of karma to be fair. Thus having learnt a technique allowing me to see the karmic law in action, I preferred to spend my time working for that instead of trying to change the world.”

“Then you agree that apartheid is unfair?”

“That I do!” exclaimed Conrad in a resolute voice. The computer remained silent. “Life is unfair,” he stated before asking: “is that all you have to ask me?”

“Today’s session is over. Good day.”

The screen on the wall went blank and the door opened. The uniformed policeman appeared in the doorway and motioned Conrad to follow him. They went back to the office with the two unfriendly men.

“You have answered correctly for today,” said Curly Hair. “Avoid going off on irrelevant issues. It only wastes time. You may leave now and you must come back tomorrow at the same time.” Curly Hair frowned and added:

“remember, it is useless trying to escape your court case. With the Global Positioning System we always know where everybody is by their deoxyribonucleic acid.”

“Deoxyribonucleic acid?” Conrad repeated in surprise.

“DNA, if you prefer,” was Curly Hair’s reply

With a nod he indicated the door and Conrad left the office.

Upon walking back to his apartment Conrad wondered if he was in a bad dream or if this was really happening.

CHAPTER 2 TIME’S UP

The next day at the same time Conrad was again taken to the windowless office by the policeman in uniform who neither smiled nor spoke. Once alone and seated on the uncomfortable wooden chair with the door closed behind him the screen on the wall in front of him showed the list of his novels.

“Here we go again,” said Conrad.

“Good morning,” replied the emotionless mechanical voice.

“Good morning,” said Conrad in a mocking voice.

“Now we are to consider your anti Jewish provocations.”

“But I am not anti Jewish,” protested Conrad. “I even participated in the construction of the State of Israel in the early nineteen seventies!”