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Homage to Ed Soja¹

Olivier Thomas Kramersch

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Oh Ed, so you up and went without us having a chance to say good-bye ... (irony of ironies: in the end, for those of us tipped off to your impending passing, we all were desperate to know: ‘How much *time* have you left?’)

Had I been able to sit at your Santa Monica bedside, this is what I would have whispered to you:

“No need to fear what is to come, because your legacy will live on ...

In your intellectual generosity and excitement, which we now provide our students here in Nijmegen, as we have the privilege of accompanying a young generation of European youth which is discovering its political voice articulating scholarship and activism around spaces of ‘refugee hospitality’ in our German/Dutch borderland;

In your passion through teaching, ever connected to the ‘perils and possibilities’ of the contemporary moment, always riveted on the *now* (that is what gave your voice something ‘world-historical’; in your seminars, you invited us on that exhilarating journey);

In the ‘wildness’ of your thinking and writing, never comfortable with the sedimented ‘order of things’, forever pushing into deeper realms of the as-yet unsaid and yet-to-be-imagined (you never wanted us to follow in your footsteps to create ‘schools’ or ‘*chapelles*’, Ed; indeed, had we done so, you would have been deeply disappointed);

In your appreciation of the supreme gifts of the literary and multi-lingual imagination (you may not have been able to read/write French, but you certainly thought in French, Italian, Spanish, Catalan and more ...!);

In your expressive and stylistic playfulness, which we also take dead seriously (laughter, the ability to laugh — and dance! —, is crucial for our postcolonial collective thought and action);

¹ This contribution has been written on the train between Kleve and Berlin, in December 2015, and it was read in the meeting of the AAG in San Francisco, in March 2016.

In the fierce honesty you brought colleagues and comrades in dialogue and debate (those infamous ‘clashes’, at UCLA or on the international conference circuit, were always the most generous form of comradeship);

In your Rotweiler-tussle with the formal discipline of Geography, wary of its institutional policing, professional hierarchies, exclusions and enclosures;

In your abiding moments of self-doubt, when you felt no one was listening (which made you intuit you were precisely ‘onto something’);

In your fully inhabiting the borderlands of the world: bodily, epistemologically, ontologically, seeing in them a vital source of insight, creativity and inspiration (without knowing it, you were a true border scholar in the highest sense of the term).

For all these reasons ... and so many more ... you have been loved, and will always remain in our minds and hearts.”

Rest in Space, Ed Soja.