

## A LONG FRIENDSHIP

It is nearly half a century since Marie-Madeleine Martinet and I first met at the University of Sussex, beside the sea in the South of England. She was continuing her studies in the history of ideas, I was taking a comparative politics degree and exploring a different kind of university from Oxford, from which I had just graduated. Come to think of it, Sussex was a different kind of university for Marie-Madeleine as well. Being fairly new, there were hardly any books; situated among grassy downland, there was no city life. It was quiet, which we both liked, and at night the campus, where we both lived, was empty of other graduate students, who, unlike us, lived what we suspected was a racy life in Brighton. So it was good to find a sympathetic friend.

I can't remember what we talked about. The university was rather strange: a slightly aggressive modern building and, certainly in my own courses, with an extremely aggressive culture. Structuralism was newly fashionable. It was then called structural functionalism, which made it even more baffling to someone who had studied (this referred to in a disdainful tone by my colleagues) 'Hobbes, Descartes and Locke'. Luckily for me, Marie-Madeleine knew all about these modish theories and was able to console me, not only because she understood the latest jargon but also, and most important, because she is a true historian. Her deep knowledge of history, eagerness to undertake practical research (climbing onto statues, peering round the backs of frames and mirrors, and the like), her appreciation of literature, painting, poetry and sculpture, her critical acuity, and her gentle way of exploding nonsensical ideas all combined to reassure those who, like me, thought that there was something missing from, well, structural functionalism.

Others will write about Marie-Madeleine as a scholar, a writer, a teacher. I know her as a friend who has never faltered. She looks as she always did, speaks and writes as she has done always. Her watercolours and drawings are immediately recognisable, as is her

handwriting. We do not meet as often as we might but, when we do, Marie-Madeleine is exactly the same: generous, observant, amusing, unfussy, interesting. She has been a constant friend and I am fortunate.

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