
des partis pris;” to remain sceptical — not this time with regard to the legitimacy of joy: this is, however, a much-debated issue in Jaccottet and perhaps his Achilles’ heel — in the face of what he sees (in 1992) as French literature’s current proclivities to the psychological, the elegant, the society-conscious yet involuted mode.

“Ne plus écouter que les conseils des fleurs, antérieurs à tout savoir,” is his shrewd advice to himself...

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Yves Bonnefoy. *Dessin, couleur et lumière*. Paris: Mercure de France. 1995. 310 pages. 140FF. ISBN 2-7152-1933-4

So many remarkable books on the act and place of art have already been given to us by Yves Bonnefoy — from *Peintures murales de la France gothique* (1954), and *L’Improbable* (1959), through *Rome, 1630* (1970) and *L’Arrière-pays* (1972), to *Sur un sculpteur et des peintre* (1989), *Alberto*

Giacometti (1991) and *Remarques sur le dessin* (1993) — that it can only be with an amazed gratitude that we receive today a book of such freshness and continuing insight as *Dessin, couleur et lumière*. All of the essays the latter contains have wither recently appeared elsewhere, in reviews, catalogues of specialised books, or been offered as lectures, but all are reworked, some considerably.

The range of assessment is inevitably impressive: Mantegna, Goya, Elsheimer, Poussin, Cortone, Tiepolo, Giacometti, and there are surprises, relatively speaking: Delacroix, Hopper, Chirico, Cartier-Bresson, plus two essays on Durand, which opens the volume, and Mozart whilst the painterly realm has its specificities it is never fundamentally separable from the intentions, the poetics, the symbolic rhetorical modes at play in all other creative enterprise. *Les différences du même*, Deguy might say... Beautiful reflective and discreetly moving pieces are to be found throughout *Dessin, couleur et lumière*. The studies, however, are not banally academic, though they are always brilliantly informed, marked by a scholarship second to none. Their foundation is, in effect, ethical, spiritual in the broadest sense of the term, openly meditative. Yves Bonnefoy encourages us, by

example to *think* our creative heritage and present; to welcome it and yet to *contest* it simultaneously; to penetrate them at once with gentleness and lucidness, compassion and a clear-eyed confidence that will not balk at a scrutiny and a debate ultimately addressed to ourselves. To write about the other is to question sympathetically but firmly one's own modes of being-in-the-world, what fires one's loves and desires, beyond mere intellectualisation, beyond system, beyond a reduction of our dazzling presence. For this reader, the essays on Delacroix and Durand are exquisitely revealing in these regards.

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Jean-Claude Pinson. *Habiter en poète*. Seyssel: Champ Vallon. 1995. 288 pages. 148FF.

Two fine volumes of poetry have come to us from Jean-Claude Pinson, the 1991 *J'habite ici* and the 1993 *Laius au bord de l'eau*, and a third, equally fine, is to appear shortly: *Philosophie morale* (also with Champ Vallon). *Habiter en poète*, subtitled *essais sur la poésie contemporaine*, is a book of an inevitable quite different character and yet it bears many of the distinctive marks that give special force to his poetry: measure, ease, scrupulously honest attention to the validity and nuance of what is said, a philosophical distance yet wedded to a sense of unassuming pertinence and even felt urgency. Part III of *Habiter en poète*, "Poéthiques," provides critical readings of five major poetic voices: Ponge, Bonnefoy, Jaccottet, Deguy and Reda; the opening section attempts an overview of (some) aspects of contemporary French poetic production (: inevitable various reference points could be added here, especially those emerging in the last ten years). Part II seeks to develop a philosophy of recent poetry, based on the thought of Heidegger and Ricoeur significantly, but with allusions to