

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

Kierkegaard, Hegel, Barthes, Rorty, Merleau-Ponty, Kant and others, increasingly and happily merging the discussion with conception and practice of poets and other writers themselves: Hölderlin, Guillevic, Simon, Perse, Sacré, Maulpoix and those about to come under more intense scrutiny in part III. The fourth and final section gives a good discussion of a range of interlocking elements in the puzzle Jean-Claude Pinson is attempting, less to solve, that to lay before us in its constituent parts: questions of lyricism, sincerity, *emphase*, literalism, new subjectivity, aesthetics and ethical *justesse*. There are some subtle and plainly wise pages, here, and definitions and equations some may have thought secure are gently shown to be available to further thought and more fluid application.

An important contribution to our understanding of contemporary literary practice at large and our critical response to it.

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Axel Maugey. *Propos sur le Québec et la francophonie. Essais.* Montréal: Humanitas, 1996.

Axel Maugey, dès son avant-propos, part en guerre contre les pessimistes et les mystificateurs qui «créent de faux problèmes et mentent comme ils respirent.» Pour lui, il existe, dans le différent Québec-Canada, «une solution juste, honorable, créatrice,» qu'il ne s'agit que de trouver avec un peu de bonne volonté. Ayant constaté que l'ensemble de la population québécoise cohabite bien, il nous propose une réflexion sur la tolérance et le devenir du Québec, par le truchement des arts et surtout de la littérature. Sa thèse consiste à montrer que la réconciliation peut se lire à travers une mosaïque de textes — essais et entrevues — dont il est l'auteur. Il nous les présente comme destinés à «sonder une société à la recherche d'elle-même» et à prouver sa vitalité et sa raison d'espérer.

Son livre rassemble ainsi d'excellents articles qu'il a publiés entre 1970 et 1983 et qu'il a remaniés soigneusement. On aurait sans doute préféré un plaidoyer tout neuf, ou tout au moins quelques chapitres de plus sur le foisonnement littéraire récent d'une littérature souvent très