

**Michel Collot.** *Chaosmos*. Paris: Belin, 1998. 96 pages. ISBN 2-7011-2056-X.

**C**haosmos: *la rumeur soudaine et sourde du gravier brassé le long du rivage*, we read at the threshold of this book of prose texts by the eminent critic of contemporary poetry, Michel Collot, "l'évidence d'un jet de pierre blanche dressée contre le bleu de l'horizon. Osmose rêvée de l'ordre et du chaos". The contingency of the immanent absorbs; and although it is felt to be beyond orderable meaning, an impulse, a desire yet urges towards an irrational though perhaps intuitable sense of the world's exquisite harmonies. The vast intricacies of the earth thus seem to offer, like language itself, at best — but why, one asks — "a solemn joy", "an austere jubilation". Collot's textual statement of what is, thus remains characterised by a tenseness, a doubt known to so many of our time, and, further, an investment in this tensionality opposing desolation to exaltation. A strong and resilient trace feeling persists of some high existential pertinence, of the mysterious meaning of desire itself, giving conceivable access to an accord of self and other, of even larger harmonies.

The question that arises in this book of recounted experiences of both earth and art centers around whether language — the right language available via a "deep sounding out" of self — is the sole way of "watching over the marvelous". Is there an inherent contradiction in respecting the need to live raw sensation, the "emotion [we don't call] poetry" (Reverdy), "banal" experience *à ras de terre*, and, on the other hand, art, writing, structure, what Bonnefoy can call our "excarnations" arising from such rough livedness? *Chaosmos* both implicitly and at times explicitly churns over such fundamental matters. It does so with delicacy and sensitivity, with straightforwardness and firmness. And in doing so, it seems to me, its "difference" from what it contemplates, rather than forging pure excarnation, invites us to better sense the strange simplicities of incarnation.

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**Gérard Noiret.** *Toutes voix confondues*. Paris: Maurice Nadeau, 1998. 119 pages. 85 FF. ISBN 2-862-31-147-2.

**T**he closing text of this fine-boned, yet robust collection speaks of a "hesitat[ion] / In a story in which the most tangible part is still the flight of hornets". *Toutes voix confondues*, in effect, in gathering together the swirling "voices" of being, in dramatising often via dialogue the mystery of our acts, our presence, the swirling identities embraced and imagined by the poem, stumbles into the dilemmas of interpretation and understanding. The strength of the book lies at once in a recognition of this vastness, of the enormities beyond our "history", enormities that "contest" the latter like the gulls circling above our