

REVIEW

Emmanuel Hocquard: la poésie mode d'emploi. Sous la direction de NATHALIE KOBLE, ABIGAIL LANG, MICHEL MURAT ET JEAN-FRANÇOIS PUFF. (*L'Écart absolu — Fondamentaux*.) Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 2020. 392 pp., ill.

In their introduction to this volume, Abigail Lang and Jean-François Puff identify the contributions of Emmanuel Hocquard in initiating a pragmatist turn in French poetry and theorizing techniques of copying and sampling. If Hocquard's legacy is too far-reaching for concise summary, these twin propositions aptly establish the poet as a bridge between the blank and literalist poetry of the 1960s and 1970s, and the most recent interventions in the French poetic scene. The product of a conference held at the Sorbonne on 1–3 June 2017, the book richly examines the poet's investigations into structures of meaning-making. Under the influence of Objectivists, such as Charles Reznikoff, and the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Hocquard opposes everyday language to the lyricism in vogue in the 1970s and 1980s. His work often proceeds negatively to expose ossified language, as well as constraining behavioural and visual habits, as though unravelling grammatical structures. In line with such a profound reassessment of poetic activity, this study analyses Hocquard's interrogations of the forms of life afforded by poetic practice. Poet collaborators, including Olivier Cadiot, Jean-Marie Gleize, Pascal Monnier, and Anne Portugal, offer readings of Hocquard's work, both examining his complex use of punctuation (Portugal), as well as reflecting on his role as poetic 'master' (Cadiot). There is also discussion of Hocquard's move beyond the written page to work with photography, video, and land art (notably in chapters by Luigi Magno and Marie-Jeanne Zenetti), and questions of space and architecture. There is ample consideration of Hocquard's engagement in the field of contemporary poetry, including his work in publishing and organizing readings, as well as teaching (in a chapter by David Lespiau, who edited *Le Cours de Pise* (Paris: P.O.L., 2018), a collection of Hocquard's lectures and publications at the École supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Bordeaux). Particularly significant for exchanges between French and American poetry, his translation work at the Royaumont Foundation and his Bureau sur l'Atlantique features prominently in chapters by Cole Swensen and Pascal Poyet. Thus, the work succeeds admirably well in inscribing Hocquard within the networks of creation through which he redefined poetic practice. In addition to documenting this role, the book pays special attention to his conception of the poetic act as something that short-circuits normative grammar. Several chapters parse the resulting idiosyncrasy (Philippe Charron) or dazzle (Damien Blanchard) that Hocquard locates in this tautological poetics. Still other pieces consider the site and structures of Hocquard's work, from his polysemic figure of the table (Stéphane Baquey), to the relationship between poetic form and his frequently employed motif of inversion (Michel Murat). What emerges is a portrait of the self-proclaimed poet-grammarian that befits the complexity and ambition of his literary enterprise. Given Hocquard's death in January 2019, the book provides a much-needed examination of his life and work and is one of the first critical volumes to take a global view of his remarkable poetic production.

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