

HILLAIRE, N. (2019). *LA RÉPARATION DANS L'ART*. PARIS: NOUVELLES ÉDITIONS SCALA.

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What to say about this book? Which is not a book, but a monument (in the sense of a memory theater), or rather, an archipelago. He is dizzying. What Norbert Hillaire borrows from the archipelagic approach (even if the expression was not used by the author) is the posture of the artist who, foreigner or exiled to himself, turns away from the essence, to look at the world as a difference – a gap constituting a new meaning. Consequently, the structure is modeled on the discontinuity of time, or better, on its fragility, freeing itself from all demiurgic pretensions, bending over “the most minuscule expressions of the days following the days” (pp. 342-343).

The reader then understands the rhythm of the work: each part is a closure. But an imperfect fence which, clandestinely, signals to the part that follows it. The work is also labyrinthine, woven with multiple ramifications, where each labyrinth is separated from the next by a gap, an interstice, a hiatus, concealing an artistic act. Between each act – that is to say, this unique event which tears itself away from any established norm – and the next, the sketched universe is destroyed and reborn: hardly raised, the fragments are destroyed, remaining as if unfinished (work in progress), as are the crafts of artists who, because they are vulnerable, broken or justly injured, participate in a new, deregulated, inexhaustible sense, becoming *open* works.

Thus, we cascade from surprise to surprise, like this always missed opportunity: *a chance encounter between a sewing machine and an umbrella*. The reader then visits the universe of Ponge, this poet who had only a short interval to track the object by a poetic inventory of the lexicon, without delimiting it; the splinters of Artaud’s words, “never irreconcilable and irreconciled with themselves and with the world” (p. 47); the Kintsugi who, instead of disguising the repair tries, on the contrary, to show it, to leave a trace, rediscovering the history of the object, but an object which “branches off” or which de-coincides with itself, part of an “aesthetic of defect”. Thanks to this deviant language, it then becomes a “more beautiful object”. Indeed, with this book, we are witnessing the collapse of the system, that is to say the collapse of all figurative data or *clichés*, to see the emergence of fragments, “an aesthetic of the accident”, hybrid, ephemeral *bricolage* “which we will only remember in the beauty of the gesture that supports it, and not the objective it aims for” (p. 116), new expressions that deconstruct activism and certainties, the Duchamp “coefficient of art” (p. 88), this dimension which escapes all grasp, of the continuous game which thwarts the scales, twisting the excess, or which resorts to

cunning, to *métis*, and other strategies of displacement: disguise, crossdressing, collage, logo, ornament, and so on... the disappearance of Perec's "e", finally, which, by evoking "the disappearance erected as a monstrous principle" (p. 281), announces, by this very lack, the emergence of a new literature. The book then closes with a hymn to language: an invitation to its renewal. It is up to the reader to find out.

How to classify this work, so well put together under its apparent disorder, so human, so enigmatic? We cannot say that it is a book on art, or at least it cannot be reduced to it. Nor can we call it "essay", in the sense of a work which supposes a construction, a becoming, the weaving of the irreversibility of time. Rather, these are artistic crumbs, where the time rediscovered is conceived as an anterior future, as "a percolation of the past in the present", as a "reinvented past", or as the rustling of two times where one does not exist anymore, and the other, not yet. And from this slit will arise the figure, to use an expression of Deleuze and Bacon (2002, pp. 66-67), like the involuntary appearance of Combray in a cup of tea.

In connection with this vertiginous work therefore, and with a Borges accent, I will say: my eyes will have seen this profane and accidental object, of which the men usurp the name, but that no writer had hitherto managed to embrace; the *impossible* repair. Through the artists mentioned, the author gives shape to this impossible. And it is the singular way of grasping the *impossible*, its failure, which will make the restorative act, that is to say also the style of the artist.

And what is the impossible (and not the impotence) that tries to say itself throughout the work: this inconceivable universe?

Caught in the whirlwind of an apparent obscenity which prevents us from believing in our real existence – as the "boss" of Robbe-Grillet who dissolves in the decor or as this *limitless* of which the author speaks, which aims to eliminate the *rest*, transhumanist madness, if there is one – can we extricate ourselves from this nauseating stupor in which the neoliberal atmosphere immerses us, this very experience of the contemporary world? The obstacle where we seem to be walled up does not lead to boredom or despair; no more than revolt – surely finished. The outcome will come from a jazz tune, as someone said, a jazz tune like an art of living.

The urgency is indeed to give up the formatted promise, prefabricated object, de-meaning to indecency, sad and fallen product of modernity. This renunciation will be accompanied by another gain: a poetics that does not exist only in poetry. Its potency, its creativity exerts its power elsewhere, in life, on life. It is the artistic *gesture* that always seems to await its unity; and it is precisely this instability, this precariousness, which contribute to making life a permanent test of lyricism, a necessary condition for the invention of a singular word, which is in search of something, of an object who shies away, faltering and improbable; and that poses his worried question, like an intimate to be circumscribed. It is this stranger to the subject that words and the artistic act, in their very hesitations, in their very failures, try to define. Musical arises like the Other of language: a *je ne sais quoi* that proclaims nomination impossible, while glorifying this *air*, fleeting

and volatile, which mocks his escape. We can only salute the pen of the author who succeeded in introducing this musical tune into the written prose, an air that triumphs in *his* Venice! and an *air* that only a trembling music can make you hear fleetingly.

Thus the obscene side of things will not prevail; and the power of art comes from its ability to conceal itself as art. It will then be up to us to decipher the difficult paths of de-alienation, those of silent poetry, of speaking painting, housing conflicting and unspeakable polyphony – such as *The Library of Babel* (Borges, 1993), with a kabbalistic structure, secretly at work in everyone in this book. Because the problem of this human drama is forever without solution, it is, as a drama, the very possibility of renewal. Never locked in language, always ready for work, enigma for itself. Tirelessly.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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