

CANNONE, BELINDA, et CHRISTIAN DOUMET. *Dictionnaire des mots manquants*. Vincennes: Thierry Marchaisse, 2016. ISBN 978-2-36280-094-8. Pp. 216.

Embracing the notion of the lexical gap, this book takes a rigorous and philosophical approach to populating the patchy and often inconsistent lexical landscape of the French language. It is a literary dictionary of sorts, which employs a method of semantic triangulation to visualize and articulate a series of lexical gaps: a dominant keyword serves as the theme of each association, while the two other members serve to delimit the nature of their relationship, the result of which is sometimes one or many novel terms the author(s) have cobbled together from preexisting French morphemes, for example *entre-deux-pouvoir-vouloir* → *pveux* (*peux+veux*) to describe someone's inability to do something because, in fact, they never wanted to; *deuil-parent-enfant* → *im-père* (*in+père*) to describe a father who has lost his only child. Composed of fifty-nine entries alphabetized by keyword and penned by forty-four expert users of the language (contemporary French authors, poets, philosophers, translators, and language and/or literature professors), the text reads like an edited volume of short stories. Some authors employ an academic style, presenting a collection of historical facts and offering well-paved lines of reasoning for the reader to follow on his guided semantic exploration (e.g., *langaige françoys-interprétations-politique*), whereas others ruminate more indirectly, instead telling a story: setting a scene, describing its players, and letting the unnamed concept emerge from the background all on its own (e.g., *envers-visage-occiput*). Regardless of their approach, the goal of these authors is not neologism for neologism's sake, but rather the pursuit of enhanced expression, one so clear and unmistakable that it is made possible only by the kind of lexical precision one might attain after a series of rigorous exercises in both semantic and morphological permutation. This volume not only fills countless lexical gaps in the French language with its small set of well-motivated innovations, but paves the way for other contemporary users to take action in situations of expressive lacunae by legitimizing a varied yet thoughtful innovation process accessible to all. As such, its value is all but limitless: for native users of French, it is a documentation of language agility—a testament to all the ways the language could neatly package recurring concepts out of familiar building blocks, but for arcane reasons does not. For second-language learners, it is a documentation of language fragility—a testament to just a few of the language's idiosyncrasies, with the larger lesson that being a successful language user involves much more than knowing how to assemble familiar chunks of meaning into words that logically ought to exist. For this reason, this book is simultaneously a unique resource for experienced French writers to challenge and diversify their lexicon, and a semantic guidebook for second-language learners building their awareness and written expression one case study at a time. Bibliophiles and Francophiles alike will delight in the impressive artistry presented for reaching deep into the French lexicon and its sociohistorical norms for the sake of engineering one's own *mot juste*.