

**Anna Gęsicka: In the absence of decision. An analysis of a few short stories, XII and XIII centuries**

**ABSTRACT:** The absence of decision making is one of the aspects of the issues of will and choices in short French court narratives of the XII and XIII centuries. The paper focuses on two executions that present this motif. Protagonists facing numerous options – or, on the contrary, being faced with dramatic turning points in the plot that restrict their choices – feel a kind of decision deadlock. In the analysed texts, the absence of decision – short or long term – is shown in the narratives with ‘*ne set que faire*’ formula (“does not know, what to do”) and a reference to advice needed by the indecisive protagonist.

\* \* \*

**Abbey Carrico: Decomposition and Re-composition: The Presence and Absence of Drowned Bodies in *Lélia* by George Sand and *L'Éducation sentimentale* by Gustave Flaubert**

**ABSTRACT:** In Romantic literature, water often serves as a symbol of death and of the dissolution of the individual, representing a passage from presence to absence. In order to show this transformation, writers frequently rely on scenes of drowning. However, in these depictions drowning does not always lead to an absence, but rather, it reveals a physical presence: that of the cadavers themselves.

Through a detailed analysis of two romantic texts whose treatment of drowning sheds light on the relationship between absence and presence, *Lélia* by George Sand and *L'Éducation sentimentale* by Gustave Flaubert, this study engages the following questions on thematic and structural levels: Does drowning undeniably bring about an annihilation of the individual? Are the boundaries between absence and presence, disappearing and (re)appearing, decomposition and (re)composition, clearly defined? Or, is there another interpretation? One that is specific to textual portrayals of immersion?

From an eco-critical perspective, it is clear that water represents an ideal space to portray the tension of life and death. As presented by Sand and Flaubert, drowned bodies inspire images of life rather than death and therefore cause the reader to question these boundaries on an imaginative and symbolic level.

\* \* \*

**Anna Kaczmarek: Decent works making the reader redden : metaphor as a way of showing sexuality (apparently) absent in some of Emile Zola's novels**

**ABSTRACT:** Sex and sexuality are two obsessions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As the literature of this time, influenced by the Victorian hypocritical morality, rejects these subjects, considered as “immoral”, the relation of any form of sexual act is consequently absent in the works of 19<sup>th</sup> century writers, even of those who consider themselves as realists.

However, the work of a writer like Emile Zola cannot overlook this problem, so important for the naturalism. For Zola, sex is a vital activity and should be shown in works of art. Therefore, to give his writings the appearance of decency, Zola uses metaphors that “sexualise” some elements of the world of his novels, like plants, animals, things, places and

everyday occupations. This allows him to show, in an imaginary way, the aspects of life that cannot be displayed openly and directly. Thank to his poetic talent makes these images constitute a valuable part of his *Rougon-Macquart* series.

\* \* \*

### **Eugenia Enache: « The Markers » of Absence in Maurice Maeterlinck's Theater**

**ABSTRACT:** Our approach is focused on the issue of the “markers” of absence as well as on the expression and materialization of that absence in a corpus of works formed of the following plays: *L’Intruse*, *Les Aveugles*, *Intérieur* by Maurice Maeterlinck.

The acceptations the concept of “absence” may receive throughout our analysis are parts of the phenomenon of progressive alienation seen, for instance, as separation (stressing the idea of distance and departure), or as solitude, then omission (in the sense of forgetting), and culminating with the inability of perception that anticipates isolation, physical imprisonment and announces death (designated through a privative prefix) as an absence that is always present and obscurity.

We attempt to reveal the “markers” of absence on the level of certain constituents of the play: the character, formed of a discursive feature, infinitely simple and repetitive, much more diminished and developing without individuality, like a silent, mysterious ghost; and the action where it is rather inaction that represents our primary direction of research. As a secondary direction, we consider the markers of absence in a language that, in the case of Maeterlinck, is remarkably pure and lacks any syntactic or lexical complication, from lexical structures (the reassessment of short expressions makes the utterances seem captivatingly strange, revealing, beyond words, unutterable, unspeakable) and the grammar, especially the semantics of its forms – the 3rd person pronouns, a form we may consider as deprived of referential content, the indefinite pronouns which indicate absence -, the semantics of punctuation, especially that of the suspension points.

\* \* \*

### **Renata Jakubczuk: The void in Camus Theater**

**ABSTRACT:** This article is an analysis of two plays by a great French literature writer, Albert Camus: *Caligula* (1945) and *Le Malentendu* (*The Misunderstanding*, sometimes published as *Cross Purpose*, 1944). After a careful presentation of the plots of the play, we are proposing a definition of the following terms: the absence and the void. Afterwards, we examine the nature of the absences presented and we offer a classification of such absences. We establish four categories of the void: philosophical, spiritual, physical, and the absence of the closest kin. A re-reading of the dramaturgical texts serves to appreciate the manner in which these texts are presented to the reader/spectator and to prove that the Camusian void is in a strict relation with an existential pain associated with the absence of God in people's life.

\* \* \*

**Michał Mrozowicki: The absence in Michel Butor's Novels. *Passing time* and *Degrees***

**ABSTRACT:** Michel Butor, born in 1926, one of the leaders of the French New Novel movement, has written only four novels between 1954 and 1960. The most famous of them is *La Modification (Second thoughts)*, published in 1957. The author of the paper analyzes two other Butor's novels: *L'Emploi du temps (Passing time)* – 1956, and *Degrés (Degrees)* – 1960. The theme of absence is crucial in both of them. In the former, the novel, presented as the diary of Jacques Revel, a young Frenchman spending a year in Bleston (a fictitious English city vaguely similar to Manchester), describes the narrator's struggle to survive in a double – spatial and temporal – labyrinth. The first of them, formed by Bleston's streets, squares and parks, is symbolized by the City plan. During his one year sojourn in the city, using its plan, Revel learns patiently how to move in its different districts, and in its strange labyrinth – strange because **devoid any centre** – that at the end stops annoying him. The other, the temporal one, symbolized by the diary itself, the labyrinth of the human memory, discovered by the narrator rather lately, somewhere in the middle of the year passed in Bleston, becomes, by contrast, more and more dense and complex, which is reflected by an increasingly complex narration used to describe the past. However, at the moment Revel is leaving the city, he is still unable to recall and to describe the events of the 29th of February 1952. This gap, this **absence**, symbolizes his defeat as the narrator, and, in the same time, the human memory's limits.

In *Degrees* temporal and spatial structures are also very important. This time round, however, the problems of the narration itself, become predominant. Considered from this point of view, the novel announces Gerard Genette's work *Narrative Discourse* and his theoretical discussion of two narratological categories: narrative voice and narrative mode. Having transgressed his narrative competences, Pierre Vernier, thenarrator of the first and the second parts of the novel, who, taking as a starting point, a complete account of one hour at school, tries to describe the whole world and various aspects of the human civilization for the benefit of his nephew, Pierre Eller, must fail and disappear, as the narrator, from the third part, which is narrated by another narrator, less audacious and more credible.

\* \* \*

**Sylwia Kucharuk *Cher Antoine ou l'amour raté* by Jean Anouilh – from the character's absence to presence**

**ABSTRACT:** The eponymous hero of this little-known play by Jean Anouilh is perceived by other protagonists as absent. Nevertheless, his presence is becoming more and more vivid with the development of the plot, which is illustrated by the analysis presented in the article. It shows the process in which the absent hero transforms into a character fully present in the text. The detailed analysis of the character's presence in particular space-time dimensions, as well as the *actant* analysis prove that the main character pretends to be absent from the beginning of the play in order to achieve a definite goal.

\* \* \*

### **Krystyna Modrzejewska: The silence of a present person in some French 20th century drama**

**ABSTRACT:** The consideration of the silence of a present person in some French 20th century drama reveals the power and the cruelty of human silence. The play by Anouilh displays the destiny of a woman who is convicted to be a voiceless witness, whereas the one by Beckett shows the silence of a husband begged by his companion to confirm her presence. In the play by Lagarce, the agony of an ungrateful son unleashes a torrent of complaints pronounced by a women belonging to his family. Finally, both of the analysed plays by Sarraute show the consequences of silence in relations between friends.

\* \* \*

### **Sophie Guermès: The Poetry of Philippe Jaccottet : repairing absence, near the frontier with God**

**ABSTRACT:** In 1961 Philippe Jaccottet wrote: « The best answer to all kinds of questions is the poem's very absence of a response ». In keeping with the elusive nature of the world, abandoned by the gods and by God, the poem remains mysterious, thus translating as well as preserving the inexhaustible richness of Nature and human beings. So the poet not only accepts such a precarious situation, but learns from it. Nevertheless, when someone dear dies, the poet tends to deny the absence of the loved one and revolts against it, since there no longer are any signs of presence: merely incomprehensible absence. Yet he chooses to bear witness, even if he remains ignorant and weak. In effect, this is a duty: poetry provides a link which enables the separation to avoid becoming a definitive absence. Words are repairing shuttles.

\* \* \*

### **Alicja Ślusarska: Getting lost to find oneself – significance of the passage between absence and presence in Bauchau's novel *Oedipus on the road***

**ABSTRACT:** Retracing in his novel the labyrinthine journey that leads Oedipus from the place of his abomination (Thebes) to the city of his future glory (Colonus), Henry Bauchau fills the emptiness between Sophocles's *Oedipus the King* and *Oedipus at Colonus*.

Bauchau's hero, a powerful king, loses everything and stabs his eyes out when the cruel truth about his real identity is revealed. Blind, homeless, devoid of meaning of life, Oedipus leaves on a journey to pass away *anywhere*. However, his way to death turns out to be, thanks to benevolent presence of others and art's liberating power, the road to personal elucidation.

The story of Bauchau's Oedipus, who finally recognizes himself as a truly human, is based therefore on the passage between absence and presence, between darkness and lucidity, on the union of contradictions which symbolize the complexity of human nature. This paper attempts to analyse different representations of absence in Bauchau's novel. Afterwards, the article focuses on the ways which facilitate Oedipus's road leading from depersonalization to rediscovery of his own identity.

\* \* \*

### **Krystyna Miazga: *Novecento*, a man, who has never existed**

**ABSTRACT:** The division of the article into three parts represents the three phenomena of absence present in *Novecento*, a work of Alessandro Baricco. First, the author discusses the peculiar existence of a main character, which, on the internal level of the story told in the book, is full of absence. On the external level, the author focuses on the manner of narration and stage performance (*didalscalia*). His second scope of interest is the lack of author's unanimous statement concerning the text genre, as well as the interspersing of important elements of drama, theatre and both, pure narrative and music forms. This, recently quite popular phenomenon, has been called hybridity. It allows the juxtaposing of contrasts, joining of contradictions and departures from the accepted specific rules in favour of artistic generic disarray. Moreover, this part of the paper stresses the difference between the original title and its French translation. The extra information added in the French version highlights the lack of precision in the original title. This significantly influences the readers' choice. The third phenomenon discussed in the article is music. It has its special place among Baricco's works. In *Novecento*, music is the second, after the pianist, protagonist. It can be even treated as equally important. However, the lack of a musical code (a proper way of communication) reduces the domination of music. By using a linguistic sign, the author gave music an important function – being the catalyst and medium between what exists but cannot be seen and what can be felt but cannot be expressed in words. Absence, perceived by human senses and the inadequacy of verbal expression, is elicited through music and, paradoxically, it becomes present.

\* \* \*

### **Christophe Premat: The absence of a brother in *Le Dicôlon* of Yannis Kiourtsakis**

**ABSTRACT:** Yannis Kiourtsakis wrote *Le Dicôlon*, an autobiographical novel which describes all the important events for the Kiourtsakis family throughout the twentieth century. The novel is written under the spell of the author's brother's absences as he committed suicide. The experience of an irremediable loss echoes the collective destiny of Greece. The article focuses on the conditions of the staging of this loss with an analysis of different types of narration. In which way is the autobiographical genre affected by the writing of the death?

\* \* \*

### **Maria Gubińska: Literature and Absence; Assia Djebar, *Le Blanc de l'Algérie***

**ABSTRACT:** The well-known French-language writer, Assia Djebar, teaches the reader to listen intently to cultural differences, inspires tolerance towards other people and touches upon the problem of the emancipation of women in the Arab-Muslim civilization.

In her work entitled *Le Blanc de l'Algérie* Djebar recalls deceased Algerian intellectuals, such as Albert Camus, Frantz Fanon or Kateb Yacine, as well as cruelly murdered writers and less known persons, who proved to be important for the author herself (namely her friends)

and for the history of Algeria. The author bemoans those absent figures, remembering their last minutes of life, their families' despair, and the atrocity of death.

The article is an attempt at a reflection on the problem of absence that is in dichotomy with presence. The absence of great Algerians is unbearable; it is not silence but a cry for the memory of the tragic moments in the history of the country. Those moments, when remembered, shall help understand better the painful contemporary times. Djébar in a subtle way removes a white shroud (white is the colour of mourning in the tradition of North-African countries), thus showing the reader the moving and colourful Algerian fresco.

\* \* \*

### **Karolina Kapořka: The torments of absence in Bertrand Gervais's *Gazole***

**ABSTRACT:** In his novel entitled *Gazole* (2001), Bertrand Gervais, a Quebec writer, takes up the issue of suicide and its psychological and social impact. The main character, Lancelot Tremblay, whose job is to write lyrics for a rock band *Le Livre des Morts* (Eng. *The Book of the Dead*), hangs himself in his apartment. His naked body with an erect penis is discovered by the other members of the band *Gazole* and *Pyramide*. Their reactions to this deadly act are, however, different. Submerging himself in mourning, *Pyramide* withdraws emotionally from his relationship with his girlfriend *Gazole*, who, deeply touched by her partner's newly developed indifference to her, delves into an investigation into the causes of Lancelot's suicide.

Being increasingly fascinated by the figure of Lancelot, *Gazole* reconstructs a new picture of him. Pieces of memories conjured up by those who knew Lancelot, like incomplete pieces of a puzzle, make *Gazole* form a romantic image of his absence. The mysterious and tragic figure of the young poet who chose to extinguish himself fires woman's imagination, who fantasizes about a sentimental and erotic relationship with him. An emptiness created by the suicide forces the woman to ponder over the nature of death, an eternal absence.

Obsessed with this imaginary presence of Lancelot, *Gazole* has to set herself free from its influence, which causes her to flirt with a razorblade in a bathtub. The foray into Lancelot's suicide gives *Gazole* an insight into her own true identity. *Gazole* discovers her internal feminine strength and frees herself from the shackles of Lancelot's mental and sexual hold.

\* \* \*

### **Maria Litsardaki: Poetry and absence**

**ABSTRACT:** Considering poetry as a literary form in close relation with absence and scarcity; this paper deals with some of the most frequent and significant forms of absence that appear in poetic texts. The physical absence of the other, due either to death or to the distance between the two individuals, is the most common kind in lyric poetry. Modern poetry often deals with God's absence, which represents an important loss for the contemporary human being, trying to understand or face it. There is also the lack of inspiration and words with efficient expressive capacity that make poets suffer. However, poetry is the only way in which they express their situation and create a meaningful language. Finally, absence in poetry is also a fundamental sign of its generic specificity in connection with the means that it uses, as

well as with its printed representation on paper, especially in the contemporary production. In all cases, poetry, based on the dialectic of being-not being, operates as a material, sensible and intellectual presence, which like the primordial logos fills the vacuum, eliminates absence and scarcity, generates and animates the human world and enriches it with presence and meaning.