

Anna Gęsicka: *Sacrum and profanum in Yonec of Marie de France (12th century)*

ABSTRACT: In Breton *lais*, we regard a brilliant marriage of Celtic and Christian « marvel » (*merveilleux*), which is revealed on various semiotic levels. The zones of *sacrum* and *profanum* interpenetrate and provoke the reader's afterthoughts on abundant and profound imagery. In *Yonec* of Marie de France, at the moment when the coming from *Autre Monde* protagonist is receiving the Eucharist he represents with his beloved one body. In this paper, I have a try to arrive at a spiritual meaning/message underlying the text characters-symbols. The clue to this analysis is the idea of transition: from one status to another, from one figure to another, or from one meaning to another.

Agata Sobczyk: *Comical crucifixes in some texts of the French medieval literature.*

ABSTRACT: The presence of the crucifix in the comical literature is a special case of an encounter of the sacred and the profane. It appears in several French medieval texts, where it is associated with sexuality or with food, it is treated with familiarity and even faces insult, which does not mean to outrage the public, but to make people laugh. The profanation with which we are dealing here has many aspects, depending on whether it can be assigned or to a concrete personage, or to the author, since it is included in the story itself. In the first case, a lot can be justified by the simplicity, but the intentions of the personage do not always seem pure. In the second case, contrary to expectation, the sacrilege is not necessarily associated with the anticlericalism. However, what is the most interesting is the question of the reception of this kind of texts in a profoundly Christian society.

Steeve Taïlamé: *The syncretism of Du Bartas*

ABSTRACT: The works of the humanist Du Bartas has been considered religious with the aim to present a calvinist conception of the world conform to dogmas. However, the presence of paganism and the effects of dissonances shows that Du Bartas belongs to a spiritual tradition beyond the dogmas. The poet indeed writes in the heritage of Marsil Ficin and his vision of the profane and the sacred is totally in accordance with the hermeticist philosopher. Under the superficial meaning and the topical speech about religious subjects, there is hidden a signification and a much higher truth not to be express clearly to profanes, those unable to understand the unity of traditions.

Maja Pawłowska: *Jean-Pierre Camus: is it possible to render an 'immoral genre' moral?*

ABSTRACT: Camus complements his novels with long peritexts, thus using his ecclesiastic authority to legitimise their moral and didactic value. In these peritexts he opposes the

licentious novels to his own devout works of fiction, which are, in his own words, not only valuable and worth recommending, but also capable of saving the readers' souls, put in danger by other texts. In any case, a close reading of these peritexts reveals a view which challenges the idea of the novel's insidiousness and which bears witness to Camus's great fascination with this officially condemned literary genre.

Geneviève di Rosa: How 18th century changing approach to the Bible reshaped the relationship to literary text: the case of Rousseau

ABSTRACT: In the 18th century, the *Bible* felt the full force of criticism by radical Enlightenment thinkers who read it piece by piece and denounced its making as an imposture - thus extending the break initiated by moral and historical critiques of the previous century. In doing so, they nevertheless did not grant it the literary status of a "profane work". Yet, Rousseau, who produced a literary rewriting of the *Book of Judges* with his *Levite of Ephraim*, pondered over the violence inflicted to biblical intertextuality during his exile in Môtiers: in his *Letters Written from the Mountain*, he thus made it an analogon of the violence caused to his own literary works. By drawing this parallel, he opened a reflection on the different manners to read a text, as well as the possibility of regulating the reader's violence through proposing an ethics of literary reception. Analogy might not work as a substitute; however, it enabled Rousseau to go beyond the mistreatment which anti-philosophers or philosophers inflicted to his works, by giving, among other things, an autobiographical orientation to his writing: one in which the author is ready to take responsibility for giving himself to the reader. The ambivalence of the sacred and the profane, the perception of a common essence of religion – defined either by sacrifice or gift – were thus what helped Rousseau invent the autobiographical pact.

Cécile Champonnois: Religious and secular topics in Nicolas François Guillard's librettos : the cases of *Proserpine* (1803) and *La Mort d'Adam* (1809)

ABSTRACT: Nicolas François Guillard (1752-1814) was one of the best librettists of the *Tournant des Lumières*. The libretto of *Proserpine* by Quinault, set in music by Lully at the end of the seventeenth century, was adapted by Guillard and created with music by Giovanni Paisiello in 1803. Six years later, in 1809, *La Mort d'Adam*, adapted by Guillard from Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock's *Der Tod Adams* (1757), was set in music by Jean-François Lesueur.

Esther Pinon: The Canvas and the Veil: Art, Literature and the Sacred in Three Romantic Narratives

ABSTRACT: The literature of the Romantics, in the first part of the 19th century, is steeped in religious doubt. Moreover, the sacred was a taboo yet unavoidable subject especially in

novels and short stories that were considered at the time profane genres. Romantic writers exploited certain covert strategies in order to speak of the unspeakable and touch the untouchable. They resort, for instance, to their artistic culture with its centuries of pictorial tradition that render religious figures and events more familiar and accessible. Musset's *Le Tableau d'église*, Vigny's *Daphné*, and Gauthier's *La Toison d'or*, all bear witness to a striking (meeting) harmony between iconoclastic and / or cavalier characters and sacred works of art that focus on Passion. All three writers interweave aesthetic contemplation with mystical communion thus revealing a new sense of the sacred that is often ambiguous, nay, subversive. And since sacred art is not in itself sacred, it allows writers to come very close to sacrilege in order to examine the fine line between the profane and the sacred.

Anna Opiela: The sacralized music in works of some Romantic writers

ABSTRACT: This article analyses poetic visions, based on synesthesia and appealing to Swedenborg's correspondence theory, evoked by listening to music. In these visions the musical impressions are in some way sanctified and they contribute to the development of spiritual area. This aesthetic phenomenon is noticeable in Balzac's novels. The music for him is the light penetrating the listener's soul and a way to access to divine mysteries. Similarly, in George Sand's works music is the inspiration to create soulful poetic visions and the character of Consuelo who, by her singing, gets to know divine things.

Tomasz Szymański: „What Is the Universal Religion?” – a study of the question asked by Charles Baudelaire

ABSTRACT: In "My heart laid bare" Baudelaire writes about the "Universal Religion" devised for "the alchemists of thought," "a religion that comes from man, considered as a divine memento." The idea, as we read in the text, was inspired by the writings of Chateaubriand, De Maistre and those of the "Alexandrians". And indeed, two first authors wrote explicitly about a „universal tradition” that finds its fulfillment in the Catholic religion. It does not matter if we recognize the "Alexandrians" as representatives of the Neoplatonic school, the Alexandrian Fathers of Church, or disciples of Hermetism, the very term implies a tradition of both syncretic and mystic character that resembles gnosis. Baudelaire's "Universal Religion," despite his Catholic convictions, cannot be associated with Catholicism. Based on a universal transmission of myths and symbols, it rather refers to eternal truths about man as well as to the divine source of all beings – also in the modern world, which holds God's existence in doubt.

Candy Hoffman: Georges Bataille and Hubert Aquin and the « left sacred »

ABSTRACT: Georges Bataille and Hubert Aquin explore a mystic experience presenting strong similarities, related to what Roger Caillois calls « left sacred », that is the impure, malefic sacred, which is accessible by transgression and corresponds to the privileged moment of unity between people. To Bataille, God is absent, even dead : *Lamma sabachtani* is the question become assertion in his essays. The object of his new mystic theology is not God, but « the unknown ». So what is divine is returned to the human being, transcendence to immanence. The goal is to free the mystic experience from its religious background and to make ecstasy accessible to everybody. It is precisely by communicating, that men can break their isolation and unite themselves with the others. « Eroticism of bodies » and « eroticism of hearts » are two of the experiences proposed by Bataille which lead to the sacred. Hubert Aquin is also fascinated by the « left sacred », by eroticism in particular, but it represents for him a temptation which takes away from the « right sacred », in this case, Jesus Christ and the perfection He is. The absolute consists much more for Aquin in being in communion with the Son of God, in being reborn and in living in the Christ of the Revelation.

Anna Kaczmarek: The church as a desacralized space in some of Emile Zola's novels

ABSTRACT: Being agnostic and believing in science only, Emile Zola perceived churches as simple buildings, monuments to a dead religion that would certainly lose the battle against nature and science. The paper gives some examples of this vision in four novels, parts of the *Rougon-Macquart* cycle.

Adam Jarosz: Around *axis mundi*. From a theoretical concept to literary images in the works by Julius Verne (*Adventures of Captain Hatteras* and *An Arctic Mystery*)

ABSTRACT: The symbolism of *axis mundi* constitutes an integral part of cultural and religious systems all over the world. Such symbolism appears clearly and precisely in all forms of religious life. As it is stressed by Eliade many a time, *axis mundi* is an intersection of three varied ontological zones (the interior of the Earth, the surface of the Earth, and the Heaven) and creates a contact place of the man with *sacrum*. The *axis mundi* symbolism, analysed here as a part of literary studies, is reflected also in two important novels by Julius Verne (*Adventures of Captain Hatteras*, 1864-65; *An Arctic Mystery*, 1897) dedicated to the polar regions. In both novels, such sites (the northern and southern poles) become a literary image of *axis mundi*, while the hypothesis finds its confirmation in the nature of psychological experiences of the heroes cast in the polar regions. The symbolic and religious study of such experiences leads to the conclusion that in both analysed cases they may be understood as the experience of a contact with *sacrum*.

Eléonore Sibourg: Finding the Temple of the Sacred: the Logic of Extremes in the Durtal Tetralogy

ABSTRACT: In the late 19th century a reversal of the values linked to the sacred and the profane can be observed. As Religion retreats, Positivism and faith in Progress fill the gap left by abandoned spiritual belief. A nostalgia for transcendence arises amongst writers. Naturalism turns out to be sterile, but it has nevertheless become impossible to believe in God.

It is in this context that Huysmans writes his novels. The Durtal tetralogy in particular focuses on its problematic: desperate, the main character wanders around Catholicism, seeking a sense of the Sacred. He first explores the world of Satanism before converting. But even when faith is regained, problems are not solved. In the religious domain itself, Durtal condemns the sacralization of the profane.

Henceforth, the Durtal tetralogy manifests itself as a novel of the in-between: from brothel to church, between up-above and down-below, between almighty materialism and bourgeois catholicism, this misanthropic writer prays for a renewed and primitive form of religious practice in which the individual can access the Sacred again. The quest for the supernatural, through a questioning of contemporary society, becomes a quest for Identity.

Claire Bompaire-Evesque: Barresian pilgrimages

ABSTRACT: This article is a inquiry about how Barrès (1862-1923) handles the religious rite of pilgrimage. Barrès stages in his writings successively three forms of pilgrimage, revealing what is sacred to him at different times. The pilgrimage to a museum or to the birthplace of an artist is typical for the egotism and the humanism of the young Barrès, expressed in the *Cult of the Self* (1888-1891). After his conversion to nationalism, Barrès tries to unite the sons of France and to inspire them a solemn reverence for “the earth and the dead” ; for that purpose he encourages in *French Amities* (1903) pilgrimages to historical places of national importance (battlefields; birthplace of Joan of Arc), building what Nora later called the Realms of Memory. The third stage of Barrès' intellectual evolution is exemplified by *The sacred Hill* (1913). In this book the writer celebrates the places where “the Spirit blows”, and proves open to a large scale of spiritual forces, reaching back to the paganism and forward to an integrative syncretism, which aims at unifying “the entire realm of the sacred”.

Sara Tongiani: The choice of Pontius Pilate, between the sacred and the profane

ABSTRACT: At the beginning of *The man and the sacred* (1939) Roger Caillois affirmed that “every religious conception of the universe implies that there is a distinction between the sacred and the profane”. Caillois discussed the theme of the sacred throughout his life, through several essays, articles and lectures. In 1961, Caillois wrote *Pontius Pilate*, a brief novel in which the author explored the dilemma of the governor of the Judea. For the first time, Caillois has changed genre. The author escaped the theme of the sacred by way of the

novel. The purpose of this paper is to show how the theme of the sacred leads to a comparison between the thought of Caillois, the theories of the College of Sociology, and the theme of *The Scapegoat* by René Girard.

Sophie Guermès: The last Judgement of Leon Delmont : moving Sacred in Michel Butor's *A Change of Heart*

ABSTRACT: The compartment, in *A Change of Heart*, is a secular space. However, the Sacred will gradually invade it through hallucinations of the narrator. Thus, an unexpected and fantastical struggle led by pope, priests, cardinals, prophets and sibyls against Leon Delmont will change his initial decision, motivating and justifying the novel's title.

Anna Ledwina: Love as a "rite of passage" – a confrontation between *the sacred and the profane* in selected works of Marguerite Duras

ABSTRACT: One of the distinguishing characteristics of Marguerite Duras' works is her focus on contradictions, especially in the realm of physicality, which is part of the "dialectic of desire", nonverbal pleasure. In the analysed novels: *Un Barrage contre le Pacifique* and *L'Amant* this passion manifests itself through the "rite of passage". It is a double discovery of one's own and someone else's physicality. Duras perceives love as an uncontrollable, violent "experiment", a rebellion against the mother and restrictions.

Narrating one of the most important (and secret) episodes of her life – crossing the Mekong – the author depicts sexual initiation of a young heroine (Duras' *alter ego*), who seduces a mature man with her behaviour and dress. This experience allows her to experience the absolute and become initiated and free. For the narrator it is an opportunity for in-depth analysis of the secular and the sacred aspects of desire. To fully understand the sacred and the profane in Duras' works, it seems necessary to approach the phenomenon from an interdisciplinary perspective

Jean-Pierre Thomas: Sylvain Trudel and the Reenchantment of the World

ABSTRACT: Since the middle of the 1980s, French Canadian novelist Sylvain Trudel constantly puts his characters in contentious situations from which they try to escape by way of creating alternate worlds at the same time real and fantastical. This action brings these characters away from their trite everyday life and into a symbolic and mystical universe. The *synthème* seems to be feeding that symbolic frame. Through the child's point of view – which seems then to become some sort of secret language –, each object belonging to the realm of the profane becomes tinted with a sacred meaning. *Synthème* and symbol would then be considered as vehicles for the sacred, that which shows through Sylvain Trudel's novels.

Izabela Front: Sadistic God : the function of the blasphemous image of God in *Dolce Agonia* by Nancy Huston

ABSTRACT: The present article seeks to analyze the way in which the blasphemous figure of God in *Dolce agonia* by Nancy Huston let the author describe the sacred element in man's life, seen as deprived of transcendental character. This is possible thanks to three text's aspects conditioned by the God's figure, which are: the contrast between passages marked by the cynical God's voice and passages focused on man's life filled with suffering ; the tone and time approach variations and, finally, the double character of God who, at the same time, is indifferent to man's lot while touched by his capacity of love.

Judyta Zbierska-Mościcka: In search of the *sacrum* in the novels of the Belgian writer Chantal Deltenre.

ABSTRACT: *La plus que mère, La cérémonie des poupées* and *La maison de l'âme*, the trilogy of the Belgian writer and ethnologist Chantal Deltenre – published in the first decade of the 21st century, illustrates post-modern religiosity, the main characteristics of which are diversity, syncretism and relativism. The search for the *sacrum* is supposed to be a type of initiation journey undertaken mostly by lost and uprooted individuals. It is a search for a safe and meaningful space (place) which is not just the opposite of the shapeless and meaningless world of the *profanum*, but also allows one to build one's own identity.

Piotr Sadkowski: The profane transposition of the Exodus in *Moïse fiction* by Gilles Rozier

ABSTRACT: Throughout the centuries Franch and Francophone writers were relatively rarely inspired by the figure of Moses and the story of Exodus. However, since the second half of 20th c. the interest of the writers in this Old Testament story has been on the rise: by rewriting it they engage the question of the identity dilemmas of contemporary people. One of the examples of this trend is *Moïse fiction*, the 2001 novel by the French writer of Jewish origin, Gilles Rozier, analysed in the present article. The hypertextual techniques, which result in the proximation of the figure of Moses to the reality of a contemporary reader, constitute literary profanation, but at the same time help place Rozier's text in the Jewish tradition, in the spirit of talmudism understood as an exchange of views, commentaries, versions and additions related to the Torah. It is how the novel, a new "midrash", avoids the simple antinomy of the concepts of the sacred and the profane. Rozier's Moses, conscious of his complex identity, is simultaneously a Jew and an Egyptian, and faces, like many contemporary Jewish writers, language dilemmas, which constitute one of the major motives analysed in the present article. Another key question is the ethics of the prophetism of the novelistic Moses, who seems to speak for contemporary people, doomed to freedom in the world perceived as chaos unsupervised by an absolute being. Rozier's agnostic Moses is a

prophet not of God (who does not appear in the novel), but of humanism understood as the confrontation of a human being with the absurdity of his or her own finiteness, which produces compassion for the other, with whom the fate of a mortal is shared.

Mathias Rambaud: The possibility of a mass. Christian funeral rite in contemporary French novel

ABSTRACT: The Christian funeral rite is, of all religious rites, the one that appears with the greatest frequency in the contemporary French novel. In *The Map and the Territory* (2011), Michel Houellebecq, for example, depicts the mass given on the occasion of the death of his own character and finds that "the Church [is] there, in his element, it [has] something to say about death. " In his book *Between naturalism and religion. Challenges of Democracy* (2008) Jürgen Habermas wonders that the agnostic thinker Max Frisch has requested the assistance of the Church for the funeral given for his own death, and concluded that "the enlightened modernity has not found real equivalent to a religious achievement of the ultimate rite of passage". These two examples – one fictional, the other real – prove the significance of the Christian discourse among different moral horizons of Western culture. What does mean this sudden religious concern at the time of death, considering that nowadays novel characters are in general atheists and live in the narrow confines of a technocratic and positivist society? Should this be linked to the freethinkers anxiety repenting in extremis of the "sins" that peppered their hedonistic life? Or is it the sign of a completely different approach of death for which could account the concept of "religious bricolage" proposed by Marcel Gauchet in his sociological analysis of our disenchanted world? These questions will help us to demonstrate that between descriptive model, abstract recourse and narrative detour, Christian discourse remains a fundamental reference in French novel creation today.
