

*Abstract: This paper analyses the main themes of the novel, which reveal the characters' concerns and their outlook on existence, which are manifest in their interactions and in the way they manage their positions and roles. The themes are connected with one another and mirror in their turn the characters' ambivalence. These are: the impossibility to know the truth and the struggle to see through equivocalness; archaeology as a search for meaning that is fossilised, i.e. preserved in an altered state, modified and nevertheless the same; reality as a complex simulacrum; the world as a theatre; the preoccupation with death, but only in tandem with life and love, whose value death is paradoxically meant to highlight; problematic relationships between parents and children. In the end, the discussion on gifts takes an interesting turn which suggests that Meaning exists – gifts are seen as hinting at the existence of a macro order, according to which things unfold beyond the mere negotiation of obligations. The ultimate meaning is given by love (whose existence has been denied), not by knowledge (which is in the end revealed as futile).*