

Alicja Muller

(Un)spectacular Bodies (Do Not) Go to War  
Uniforms and Discipline

The aim of this article is to present uniforms (or costumes) as masks used by the disciplinary authority to control and change bodies. By the word “costume” I understand both the material object and a repertoire of abstract rules according to which bodies are formed and trained. Defined in this way, the mask is a medium which, on the one hand, covers the individual characteristics of whoever wears it, and, on the other, somehow directs his or hers actions. To describe this mechanism, I choose two seemingly different spaces: classic ballet and the military. I show that in both disciplinary power operates on similar – perhaps even identical – principles. In the first part of the article, I develop the concept of mask-costume, focusing on its theatrical character. In the second part, I study two texts of culture: Cezary Tomaszewski’s play *Cezary goes to war* (2017) and Artur Żmijewski’s short film *KRWP* (2000). They provide excellent material to exemplify my initial diagnoses.

Keywords: mask, body, power, ballet

Tomasz Żaglewski

Masks of Batman. The Costume as an Element  
of Superhero Narratives in Comics

The main goal of the article is to present the theme of mask and costume in the superhero comic’s narratives as a key element not only for visual aspects of superheroes but also their psychological background. Using an example of Darwyn Cooke’s *Batman: Ego* comic book, the author sees mask and costume as “subjectified” creations in Cooke’s work. They become starting points for the stories, which concentrate on the multilayered dependence between the mask-ed and un-mask-ed personality of a hero.

Keywords: theory of comics, history of comics, text analysis

Paweł Tomczok

Panmasquerade. Masks and Masking in Bruno Schulz’s Fiction

The author of this article analyses different meanings of mask in Bruno Schulz’s fiction and non-fiction. In his critical statements Schulz contrasts mask with substance, the latter capable of assuming various masks. Taking into account the context of *Cinnamon Shops*, this can be read as a commentary on Schulz’s writing practice and as a strategy thus to mask his own biography. Another theme discussed in this article is that of the relation between mask and face in Schulz’s short stories. This discussion focuses on the social context of the different representations of the face and on the elimination of dialogues from the narratives: the narrator treats the characters’ facial features as source of knowledge about the world, rather than conversations with them.

Keywords: Bruno Schulz, mask, autobiography

Izabela Tomczak, Paweł Stachura

Shaping the Avatar Identity in Computer Games

A Study in Game Adaptations of Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*

The article discusses possibilities of character building in computer games, which for many gamers is a way of expressing and modifying their own identity. Games differ in the degree of freedom given to a gamer in shaping the identity of the in-game character, or avatar, and in many games avatar-formation is an important part of game structure, providing a lot of game satisfaction, and requiring as much time and involvement as the game-play itself. The games under discussion are adaptations of H.D. Thoreau's *Walden*. The choice of games stems from the observation that identity, freedom, and limitation are important themes of Thoreau's work, which is reflected in the games under discussion. The three games discussed in the article are, thus, treated as modernist and postmodernist readings of a literary text, giving the reader/gamer more or less limited possibilities of shaping the character/avatar.

Keywords: cultural theory, Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, videogames

Sonia Front

"Souls Cross Ages Like Clouds Cross Skies"

Network Identity in *Cloud Atlas*

In 21st-century science fiction narratives, the figure of the cyborg has been replaced by a new group of liminal characters: avatars, clones, sentient AI, genetically modified humans and time-displaced individuals. Through these characters, the narratives explore philosophical questions about the unity of personal identity. One of the films that investigate this question is Tom Tykwer's and Lilly and Lana Wachowski's film *Cloud Atlas* (2012), as it proposes the notion of network identity, divorced from time. Network identity – in the form of transmigration of souls – is enacted in the film by the concept of eternal recurrence which is the film's overriding framework. This identity is what connects the six juggled stories, spanning through various historical eras from the nineteenth century to the distant future. The paper analyses the film's concept of twenty-first century subjectivity, singular and manifold, separated and connected simultaneously, and how it taps into the theme of global interconnectedness and co-temporality brought about by the media and globalization.

Keywords: film, network identity, *Cloud Atlas*

Tomasz Burzyński

Masks Off. Reflections on Subjectivity

from the Perspective of the (Bio)medicalization Processes

The paper deploys conceptualizations and theories typical of cultural studies in order to discuss mechanisms orchestrating the formation of human subjectivity from a perspective of (bio)medicalization processes (Peter Conrad, Adele E. Clarke); that is, modernization tendencies aiming to subordinate social practices to medical jurisdiction. In this methodological context, the article is also an interdisciplinary research project which gestures towards a conceptualization of human subjectivity in which considerations referring to the dichotomy

of agency and structure (Anthony Giddens, Piotr Sztompka) are supplemented by the factor of human corporality. The opportunity to subsume biological and biomedical issues within cultural studies without the risk of biological reductionism is the result of providing a theory of subjectivity that involves its probabilistic character. The notion of probabilistic subjectivity is a theoretical construct whose significance for cultural theories springs from the development of genetics and molecular biology and their contribution to processes of biomedicalization.

Keywords: medicalization, biomedicalization, subjectivity

**Marcin Hanuszkiewicz**

A Mask or an Incarnation?

On the Ontic Dynamics of the Fictional Universe  
in the Works and Theories of Bruno Schulz

The essay is an attempt to look at the literature of Bruno Schulz as an entity profoundly connected with his worldview and engaged in a complex interaction with reality. Determining the nature of this interaction constitutes another facet of this essay's aim. Two interpretations of this twofold influence are considered – one sees it as an operation of masking, while the other perceives it as an act of manifestation or incarnation. The contemplation of the subject matter takes the form of a discussion with Schulz's literary and theoretical texts, and is supported by analyses performed by schulzologists and by elements from semiotic and mythological theories. With the help of these tools, an interplay of the categories of "mask" and "incarnation" is defined as permeating Schulz's works. It is only at the level of his understanding of mythology that the category of incarnation triumphs.

Keywords: mask, Bruno Schulz, mask

**Anna Maria Bielak**

A Beautiful Dwarf and a Jewish Paper Nose

The purpose of the following article is to deconstruct multiple meanings of the presence of a Jewish female dwarf in Albert Cohen's novel *Belledu Seigneur*. The key moment of the narrative, where this character appears, does not allow us to ignore her. Her presence is so enigmatic and the scene so oneiric that we are forced to find intertextual connections, seeking a wider historical and literary context which will help us understand this figure.

Keywords: Albert Cohen, *Belledu Seigneur*, dwarf, femininity

**Alina Mitek-Dziemba**

Postsecularism as a Way of Reanimating Postcolonial  
Reading Practices. On the Limits and Paradoxes of Secular Criticism

Even though it is difficult to imagine a phenomenon more closely intertwined with the processes of colonization and decolonization than secularism, there are scant references to it in the postcolonial writing and accompanying critical theory. The critics' reticence seems hardly justifiable considering the fact that secularization processes have been in the centre of the hottest political and ideological debate for more than a decade now, while their critical

examination and evaluation appears inevitable due to the ongoing process of undermining the historical view of the religious vs secular divide by alternative ways of ordering the public space in non-Western societies, especially as the latter have also become, on the immigrants' arrival and vocal presence, a powerful factor in the political game played out within Western countries. As the violent course of events after 9/11 has prompted most of the postcolonial critics to perceive Western democracy and secularism in the black-and-white mode by inscribing it in the Eurocentric and colonial framework, the secular-religious opposition has become one of the postcolonial studies' fundamental dichotomies that it seeks to transgress and overcome, even though the attempt may well be in vain. Consequently, the term "postsecular," despite all the subtlety with which it was introduced into the fields of philosophy, theology, sociology and literature, has come to indicate a posture of critical aversion to the secularist order as quintessential for the Western modernity and Enlightenment project and opting for the radical division between the public reason and the need for faith. The aim of the article is thus to examine the meanings ascribed to the terms such as "postsecularism" and "postsecular spirituality" in postcolonial theory, as well as to evaluate the attempts at their application to the field of literary studies.

Keywords: postcolonialism, postsecularism

### Przemysław Górecki

An Aesthetic Reflection on *Kappa* by Ryūnosuke Akutagawa

The article is an attempt at reading the modernistic short story of Ryūnosuke Akutagawa, a Japanese "father of short story," in terms of aesthetics. The subject of this analysis is the Polish translation of the work *Kappa*, also known in Poland under the title *In the land of Aquarius*, made by Mikołaj Melanowicz. The story shows a phantasmagoric visit to the strange country (peopled by anthropomorphic creatures) and some sober observations on this disturbingly atypical land made by the main character. Due to the multitude of culturally recognizable themes referring to the history of Gulliver, the work bears remarkable signs of anti-utopia. My analysis takes on the themes of the story that are important from the point of view of this branch of philosophy and on its symbolic dimension with its immersion in the tradition of Japanese aesthetics. Basing my interpretation on the critical revision of the basic assumptions of the Japanese aesthetics school and on a close reading of the two surfaces of the work (literal and symbolic), I consider how the text functions in a philosophical way. The article focuses both on the literally aesthetic level of expression (descriptions of the presented world) and on the aesthetics of narration and the way of constructing the text.

Keywords: literary studies, comparative studies, Japan, modernism, aesthetics, anti-utopia

### Sylwia Papier

Game in History by Paweł Jarodzki. An Analysis of *Kompletna historia wszechświata ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem Polski* in the Context of the "Visual Narrative" about Poland

The article discusses chosen themes in Paweł Jarodzki's comic book *Kompletna historia wszechświata ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem Polski* [A Complete History of the World, with Special Attention Paid to Poland]. Of special concern is the context of contemporary visual narrative.

This goal is to define Jarodzki's book as a representative of hybrid genre and to discuss his strategies of representing history.

Keywords: Paweł Jarodzki, artbook, history, narratology

