
Editorial

Marlies Gabriele Prinzi*

Dear Reader,

If you have been with us for a while – a few of you perhaps even since the beginnings of *Opticon1826* back in 2006 – you will have noticed that names on the editorial board have changed again. Susan Skelton has handed the reins of the journal over to myself as she enters that final and rather crucial stage of her PhD. We wish her well and look forward to soon receiving good news about her viva.

With new responsibilities bestowed on me, I felt spurred to browse past issues of the journal that I now head for both guidance and inspiration. Reading the eloquent editorials of those who came before, it struck me that *Opticon1826* has gone through many hands in its six years of existence, each editor-in-chief imparting her own special touch to the journal's formation. Gesche Ipsen courageously oversaw *Opticon1826*'s genesis and a further three issues, guaranteeing sure footing for the future. Christine Lai took over in Autumn 2008 and soon introduced the image gallery as well as distributing the *Opticon1826* pamphlet with wonderful artwork and extracts from the articles published online. She was followed by Yi Ling Huang, who continued the hard work for three issues before Susan Skelton pioneered the move to a new website with the support of Ubiquity Press, relocating the entire reviewing and editing process to an online system and giving us an ISSN number (2049-8128 for the curious ones among you) in turn as well.

Over all this time the number and kind of contributions that we have published in *Opticon1826* has varied – some of you may still remember the *To the Jugular of Jargon* column, which enlightened readers about words we use, or *Ken's Challenge* to muse about something outside one's own discipline. What has remained the same, however, is our aim to be a cross-disciplinary journal, a forum for the entire community of UCL and – I will quote the ever silver-tongued Gesche here – “a place in which we can all gather and consider each other's offerings: weigh them, declare them wanting or complete, negotiate a price if we choose, and walk away with them or from them, however we wish” (see <http://www.Opticon1826.com/issue/view/11>).

Thus, as always, we present you a hopefully thought-provoking selection of pieces from different corners of UCL, all contributions diverse both in content and form. Admirers of Beckett – like myself – will delight in “On Music in Samuel Beckett”, written by now alumni **Xuyan Shen**, which was the deserving winner of the FIGS MA Dissertation Prize in Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies last academic year. We are equally thrilled to be *finally* publishing “The Brave Little Toaster from Print to Film: Obsolescent Appliances and Capitalist Allegories”, a paper that **Professor Margaret Diane Stetz**, from the University of Delaware, USA, presented at the *Autopsies/Afterlives of Dead Objects* conference organised by UCL's Autopsies Research Group back in 2010. **Sarah De Sanctis** is another alumni, from Comparative Literature (Centre for Intercultural Studies), who investigates two very different writers' takes on a Greek heroine in “From psychoanalysis

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to politics. Antigone as a revolutionary in Judith Butler and Slavoj Žižek". **Charlotte Warren-Gash** from the Department of Infection & Population Health weighs the different ways to diagnose a common illness in her research note on "Diagnosing Influenza for Research", while **Caroline Grangier** (Geography Department) offers thoughts on a book on Newfoundland fishing practices published by the Canadian environmental researcher Dean Bavington in "Critical Review of *Managed Annihilation*".

But this is not all: alongside our normal online issue, dear reader, you can also peruse a special print publication of *Opticon1826* for the first time ever: *Fragile Realities* is compilation of papers from a conference organised by *ThoughtsForward*, a group of postgraduate students from SELCS for whom research relationships rather than the specific language or discipline matter the most. In their view boundaries are there to be broken (and I can only agree enthusiastically). *Opticon1826*'s very own Arts & Humanities Faculty Editor **Pei-Sze Chow** is one member. Based in Scandinavian Studies, her article, "The Landmark on Film: Representations of Place and Identity" explores three films of the contemporary Swedish filmmaker Fredrik Gertten. Pei Sze's department colleague **Essi Viitanen** is also film-focused in "The Cinematic Land of Tapio: Suburban Finland Reimagined", but works with Jaako Pakkasvirta's *The Green Window* (1968). **Camilla Sutherland** (Spanish) follows Remedios Varo, a Spanish émigré artist, to Mexico by exploring identity and exile in her paintings in "Shifting Realities: Migration and Surreality in the Work of Remedios Varo". Nichola Smalley (Scandinavian Studies) investigates the socio-political issues that emerge in literature and rap in Sweden, while **Alicia Spencer-Hall** (French) displaces boundaries in her paper "Post-Mortem Projections" using medieval hagiography to study the celebrity culture of the present, specifically the holographic rap concerts of the deceased rapper Tupac. This leaves **Kinga Bloch** (German),

whose "Realism Bites! The Impact of a Fictional Teen Suicide on West German Public Debates in the 1980s" discusses the impact a television series had on viewers in Germany and beyond. *Nota bene*: with a limited print run and readers in far corners of the world we are, of course, also making the *Fragile Realities* papers available online, eternally.

The 'regular' section of *Opticon1826* issue also features a number of images taken by UCL students. **Charlotte Hills**, from the Department of Spanish & Latin American Studies, gives us a glimpse of her year abroad experience in Spain in her photographs *Suerte de banderillas* and *On the Road to Nerja*. **Sneha Krishnan**, a PhD student in Civil Engineering, observes both the near and far by offering a poetic vision of a bird at Buckingham Palace and highlighting *Vulnerability in Disasters* through several pictures documenting the 2012 floods in Assam, India. I myself invite you to Jammu & Kashmir, a state generally avoided by visitors to India but which is absolutely beautiful, and also take you on a stroll through a sort-of slum in New Delhi.

I hope to see yet many more submissions – creative, academic or otherwise – in our Spring Issue. Do submit your work if you think you have something to share with the wider UCL community. Also remember that the deadline for the UCL Graduate School Review Competition (<http://www.grad.ucl.ac.uk/comp/2012-2013/review/>) is quickly approaching – a competition we very much encourage you to enter for winners do not only receive monetary prizes but will also see their reviews published in *Opticon1826*. Last but not least, we would love to stay in touch with you on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/Opticon1826>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/Opticon1826>), where we are getting ever more active so as not to fall behind in this increasingly digital world.

Yours faithfully,

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Editor-in-Chief

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submitted is reviewed by the appropriate person and communicate, often extensively, with our authors. Appreciation also goes to the unnamed peer reviewers who provide valuable feedback and of course **Rebecca Harrison, Amanda Riddick** and **Tom Ue**, my wonderful trio of copyeditors, whom I simply could not do without. A special Thank you! also for **Susan Skelton**, the former editor-in-chief, who may be deeply immersed in her own research by now but laid some of the foundational stones for this issue.