

Dear Reader,

At the risk of flogging a cliché to death, and of mixing my metaphors, this is our Difficult Second (whoever said there was such a thing as an Easy First?). Judging by the enthusiastic response we received to the first issue of OPTICON1826, expectations for this one were higher than the collective blood-pressure of the UCL student populace in this season of exams. Well, maybe not *quite*, but you get the idea.

We hope we have lived up to them.

In the process we have gained not only the usual wisdom, but also four new faculties (Biomedical, Engineering, Life, and Mathematical and Physical Sciences), which thus complete our scope of the entirety of UCL. We don't have contributions from all of them in this issue, but the gates have been opened; here's hoping for the flood ...

We have also gained a logo; the winner of the competition we ran earlier this year is Nicholas Beech, a first-year PhD student from The Bartlett, whose elegant and intriguing design perfectly encapsulates what we are about, we think, and now graces our web site and the front cover of this issue's print copy.

Though we had no theme for this issue, it seems to me that there is something common to all contributions: a willingness to investigate critically things we take for granted; to delve deeper into the apparently obvious and familiar in order to release something fresh for us all to drink.



In **'The Forgotten Rights'**, Asha James asks, provocatively, whether socio-economic rights should be legally as enforceable in the UK as political and civic rights. Should one have as much right to a roof over one's head as to vote? Then again, can one vote, if one does not have a roof over one's head?

Catherine Sebastian shows, in **'The Second Decade'**, how, when someone's difficult teenage child claims that 'you just don't understand', this might be closer to the truth than one imagines. Explaining recent research on the structure and function of teenage brains, she believes that its results should have significant implications on educational policy and other such matters.

Speaking of childhood, Alice Gavin's article **'The Word of the Father / The Body of the Mother'** is an interpretation of Tarkovsky's 1974 film *Mirror* using the psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan and those whom he has influenced. The film deals with the protagonist's attempt to come to terms with his past, and Alice uncovers in the process the film's presentation of the problems of identity.

Alexander Andreev's **'To What Extent are International Organizations Autonomous Actors in World Politics?'** is an investigation into the reality of international organisations; they can display a policy-making and organisational behaviour that needs to be paid attention to, in order fully to understand the extent of their influence on the world.

Shaping the world in another way is Pasolini, in his 1961 film *Accatone*. Pei-Suin Ng's article **'Poetry of Squalor'** discusses the relation between 'beauty and blemish', poetry and reality, through the way in which the director presents the Roman slums: aestheticising, or poeticising, the place in a way that perhaps prevents the viewer from seeing it for what it was.

Hsu Huang's **'Scopic Regime and Organised Walking'** shows how mistaken we might be, if we think that a visit to a museum is simply that. In fact, a museum's layout fascinatingly produces sociological events that lead some to regard museums as reflections of the formation of modern society. Your next visit will not be the same.

In **'Anti-Bardolatry Through the Ages'**, Erin Sullivan explores four writers (Voltaire, Tolstoy, Shaw and Wittgenstein) who were less than enamoured of Shakespeare, and thereby attempts to understand whether one's negative criticism of, for example, Shakespeare's work can be any more objective than someone else's positive criticism.

**'The Meaning of Racially Aggravated Crime: A New Decision from the House of Lords'**, Miriam Goldby's case review of the 2007 decision on *R v Rogers*, takes a close look at a recent example of how racism is treated when a 'racially aggravated' crime is brought to trial. Is the 'racially aggravated', so to speak, acknowledged as part of the offence, as a separate offence, or in the form of harsher punishment for the convicted? The answer is bound to inspire much discussion.

In **'Re-imagining the Caesars'**, Dr Marco Angelini reviews the 1968 BBC-series *The Caesars* on the occasion of its recent DVD re-issuing, and comments on the wider question of why Rome has been so appealing to so many generations of Western humans. It seems that Rome, including its politics, people and culture, is truly immortal, not only as our antecedent, but also as a symbol.

The interpretation of this issue's creative component is of course a matter for you, reader, to execute, so let me be forgiven for merely listing authors, titles and genres – anything else would not have done them the justice they deserve. All three works are as mysterious and thought-provoking as they are alluring and entertaining: Linda Tilling has

contributed **'Altered Realities'**, a collection of manipulated digital photographs with an accompanying text; Dorota Sciepko-Cram has written a short story, **'Greyscapes'**; and Mike Bovingdon has composed a poem, **'The Dharma of Poetry'**.

Finally, we have published two enlightening submissions to our **'To the Jugular of Jargon'** challenge, by Dr Oliver Hulme and Louise Whiteley, which go some way to show the extent to which apparently self-explanatory words are open to interpretation. Another such challenge will be announced shortly, together with our call for papers for our Autumn 2007 issue and an essay competition (with prizes). Look out for the emails and posters.

If you would like to comment on anything, be it a particular contribution or OPTICON1826 in general, email us, or use the 'Opticon1826' discussion forum at <http://uclac.facebook.com> .

Down the hatch!

Gesche Ipsen  
*Editor-in-Chief*