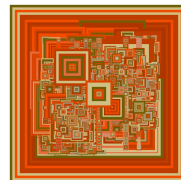


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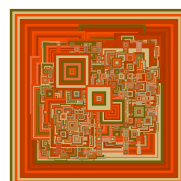
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'I will not die a monster': The Transformation of the Human Body: its Portrayal, Interpretation and Storytelling in Contemporary Mainstream Anglo-American Cinema
Caleb Turner (*University of Kent*)

Chopping Down a Beanstalk? The (Un-)Uncanniness of Freud's Concept of the Fairy Tale
Melanie Dilly (*Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg*)

Punctuation Today: A Qualitative Study
Emmanuelle Betham (Independent Researcher)



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Skepsi is an online research journal based in the School of European Culture and Languages at the University of Kent (SECL) and is entirely run by research students.

The aim of *Skepsi*'s editorial board is twofold: to honour the spirit of SECL by striving to take advantage of its unique position as a crossroads in academic studies in Europe and to become a forum for European postgraduate researchers and postdoctoral scholars by developing collective thinking processes in the context of academic research.

Our title, *Skepsi* — which comes from the Ancient Greek ‘σκεψις [*skēpsis*]’ or ‘enquiry’ and the Modern Greek ‘σχέψις [*sképsis*]’ or ‘thought’ — symbolises our will to explore new areas and new methods in the traditional fields of academic research in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Originality and creativity in the approach of thought and of texts are crucial for us: to enhance and to promote these aspects will be our contribution to the tremendous range of existing academic publications.



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On a personal note, the Editorial Board must offer a big thank you for their contribution to *Skepsi* to two of its members who have retired since the last issue, Kamilla Pawlikowska and Alvis Sforza Tarabochia both founder members. We wish them well in the future and welcome in their place Marco Piasentier, Guillaume Collett and Nina Rolland.

However, despite having retired from the Editorial Board, both Alvis Sforza Tarabochia and Fabien Arribert-Narce continue to assist *Skepsi* in the background, Fabien by making his experience available not only for this and future issues but also for our forthcoming conference and Alvis by using his expertise in matters technological to keep the blog updated and design the cover of this issue.

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Foreword

Variety, goes the old adage, is the spice of life. If this holds good and by ‘life’ one understands ‘experience’, this issue of *Skepsi*, our seventh, will add spice to the reading experience of whoever dips into it, as its title ‘Miscellanea’ suggests. Whilst being on very different topics, two of these articles are, however, linked by the fact that both were submitted in response to an essay competition promoted by *Skepsi*, the idea for which was developed back in the golden days of late summer last year. The competition invited current and former post-graduate students in Humanities and the Social Sciences to submit an essay which had been awarded a mark of at least 70%, so that they could taste the publishing experience. All the essays received in responses to this announcement, effectively a call for articles, would be peer reviewed and those then selected by the Editors would be published, after revision and copy editing, in the usual way. The response was an encouraging number of essays on a wide range of subjects, from which two were selected that are, with heartiest congratulations to the authors, presented in this issue.

Caleb Turner challenges the convention in, chiefly, Anglo-American cinema that seems to support stereotypical notions in Western culture which equate, on the one hand, ‘hero’ with ‘human’ and ‘good’ and, on the other, ‘villain’ with ‘monster/inhuman’ and ‘evil’, so that the one is seen as antithesis of the other. Through his examination of two different kinds of monsters, the digitally constructed one such as is found in films like *Transformers* and *Hulk*, and ‘undesirables’, in which term are included mutants, androids, hybrids and cyborgs such as Doc Ock in *Spiderman 2*, Turner argues that, far from being straightforward polar opposites, these concepts are the extremes of a broad spectrum that encompasses our concept of ‘humanness’.

Examining Freud’s observation in ‘The Uncanny’ that he ‘cannot think of any genuine fairy story [...] that has anything uncanny about it’, Melanie Dilly applies his theories of the uncanny in literature, together with those of, amongst others, Armit, Bettelheim and Zipes, to the familiar fairy story of ‘Jack and the Beanstalk’. She concludes that, if the views of these other critics are to be accepted, there is much in the fairy tale that could be uncanny but this does not mean that the genre is uncanny *per se*; the sense of the uncanny derives from the reading experience of its audience.

No monsters or uncanny phenomena feature in Emmanuelle Betham’s article, a qualitative study of punctuation as used and understood by a small target group, which was

originally presented as a paper at the conference *The evolution of research: adapting to survive in a changing world* organised by the Post-Graduate Research Association and held at Canterbury Christ Church University in June 2011. Her study provides empirical data regarding, amongst other matters, punctuation's function in different contexts and subjective factors that may affect its use. She concludes that punctuation is a skill which cannot be acquired independently of the socio-cultural experience in which it is used and that more research is needed into the way it is taught.

No doubt reading was not quite the pleasure that Willmore, the eponymous Rover of Aphra Behn's 1681 play *The Rover*, had in mind, when he declares, 'Variety is the soul of pleasure' (Part II, Act I), but reading should be a pleasure and if variety gives it soul as well as adding spice, *Skepsi* is pleased to facilitate this.

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