



**Skin.**

**On the Cultural Border between Self and the World.  
Übers. von Thomas Dunlap.**

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“Only skin deep,” “getting under one’s skin,” “the naked truth”: metaphors about the skin pervade the language even as physical embellishments and alterations – tattoos, piercings, skin-lifts, liposuction, tanning, and more – proliferate in Western culture.

This important cultural study shows how our perception of skin has changed from the eighteenth century to the present and argues that despite medicines having penetrated the bodily surface and exposed the interior of the body as never before, skin, paradoxically, has become a more and more unyielding symbol.

Claudia Benthien examines the changing significance of skin through brilliant analyses of literature, art, philosophy, and anatomical drawings and writings. Benthien discusses the semantic and psychic aspects of touching, feeling, and intellectual perception; the motifs of perforated, armored, or transparent skin; the phantasma of flaying; and much more through close readings of such authors as Kleist, Hawthorne, Balzac, Rilke, Kafka, Plath, Morrison, Wideman, and Ondaatje. Myriad images from the Renaissance, anatomy books, and contemporary visual and performance art enhance the text.

## **Contents**

### **Preface to the American Edition**

#### **I. The Depth of the Surface**

Introduction

#### **2. Boundary Metaphors**

Skin in Language

#### **3. Penetrations**

Body Boundaries and the Production of Knowledge in Medicine and Cultural Practices

#### **4. Flayings**

Exposure, Torture, Metamorphoses

#### **5. Mirror of the Soul**

The Epidermis as Canvas

## **6. Mystification**

The Strangeness of the Skin

## **7. Armored Skin and Birthmarks**

The Imagology of a Gender Difference

## **8. Different Skin**

Skin Colors in Literature and the History of Science

## **9. Blackness**

Skin Color in African-American Discourse

## **10. Hand and Skin**

Anthropology and Iconography of the Cutaneous Senses

## **11. Touchings**

On the Analogous Nature of Erotic, Emotive, and 'Psychic' Skin Sensations

## **12. Teletactility**

The Skin in New Media

## **13. Conclusion**

**Notes**

**Bibliography**

**Index**