

Skepsi

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Pharmakon: Literature and Violence



Mourning with Antigone: Civil War and Public Mourning in Patricia Ariza's *Antígona*

Katie Billotte (Royal Holloway College: University of London)

Fetishism and Symbolic Violence: Anish Kapoor's *Svayambh*

Filippo Menozzi (University of Kent)

Therapeutic Narrations: Recounting Fascist Psychological Violence in Alberto Asor Rosa's *L'Alba di un Mondo Nuovo* and Esther Tusquets' *Habíamos ganado la guerra*

Christian Gabriele Moretti (University of Kent)

Confronting Violence in Reading and Representation: Brutality and Witnessing in the Work of Edwidge Danticat

Jo Collins (University of Kent)

Georges Bataille's 'Ethics of Violence'

Angelos Evangelou (University of Kent)

Violence, Resistance and the Birth of a New Literature

Vedita Cowaloosur (University of Warwick)

The *Skepsi* team

Fabien Arribert-Narce
Krista Bonello Rutter Giappone
Harriet Clements
Wissia Fiorucci
Melanie Foehn
Maureen Kincaid Speller
Kamilla Pawlikowska
Alvise Sforza Tarabochia

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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 [*skepsis*]' or 'enquiry' and the Modern Greek 'σκέψις [*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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<http://blogs.kent.ac.uk/skepsi>

skepsi@kent.ac.uk

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School of European Culture and Languages
Cornwallis Building (North West)
University of Kent
Canterbury, Kent, CT2 7NF, UK

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No issue would be possible without articles from authors, so no small thanks are due not only to those whose articles have been selected for publication but also to the others who submitted articles for consideration but were, on this occasion, disappointed. The contribution of the teams of volunteer peer reviewers, copy editors and proofreaders to the quality of the journal’s content must also not be overlooked. Especial thanks in connection with this issue must go to Alvise Sforza Tarabochia and Albert Garcia Ferrero for their advice and assistance with regard to translations from Italian and Spanish.

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Filippo Menozzi

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Foreword

As Edward Said observed in many of his important writings, texts and representations do not exist as if in a void but play an active role in the world and are contaminated by a multitude of heterogeneous realities. Part and parcel of this fundamental quality of 'worldliness', violence is one compelling reality which has reached a remarkable threshold of visibility in the contemporary world and which has been subjected to a problematic work of distancing and spectacularisation.

The effects of violence are many: it both limits narrative possibilities, restrains by the imposition of silence and demands the most dramatic and urgent representative articulations. This issue of *Skepsi* draws its metaphorical inspiration from the image of the *pharmakon*, an ambiguous Ancient Greek word suggesting as it does in its double meaning of medicine and poison connotations of both pharmaceutical remedy and perilous supplement to the human organism. The ambivalence of the *pharmakon* could elucidate an important aspect of literature and art, in their participation in and testimony to contexts of violence, war and brutality. With their different emphases, the articles included in this issue address the many and varied ways in which violence imposes a worldly dimension of artistic and literary forms. Although the conference organisers intended literature to be the main cultural practice under scrutiny, these critical essays have intriguingly extended their creative scope far beyond the analysis of literary works by reaching into expressive domains such as theatre and the plastic arts and through their dynamic interaction with divergent types of violence, from the political brutality of totalitarian and colonial regimes to the ideological configurations of structural and symbolic violence, or dramatic situations of war and conflict.

The essays collected in this issue make use of different theoretical and methodological frameworks and aim at presenting original interventions in different areas of research in the humanities: from postcolonial studies to comparative literature, psychoanalysis, aesthetics, sociology and philosophy. I hope the reader will encounter in the following pages material that stimulates thought and critical reflection.

Filippo Menozzi, Guest Editor, Autumn 2010

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