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Greetings from the Bluegrass!

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University of Kentucky

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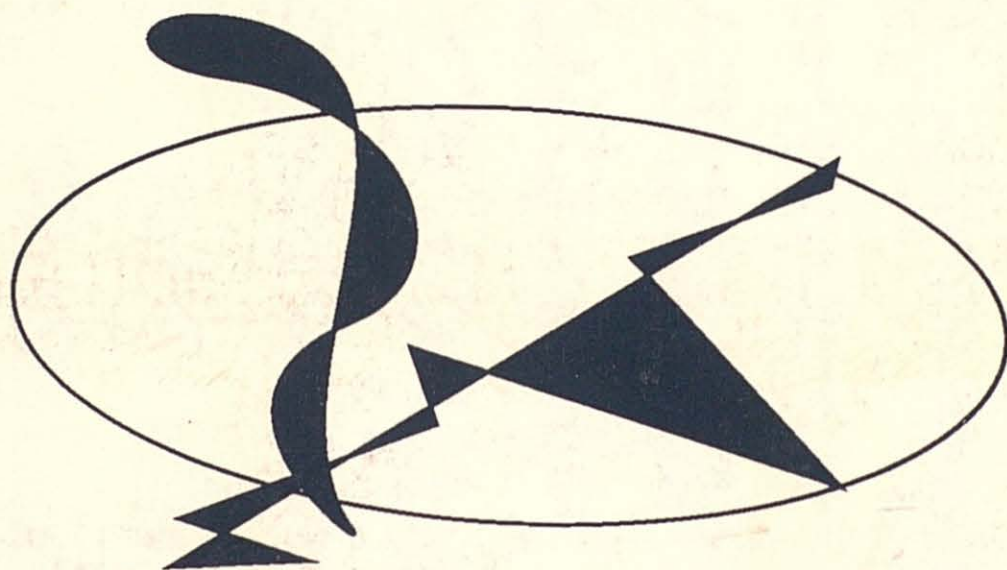
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The Modern Concept of Myth

by A. Von Hendy

Personal Weapons and the Constitution of Man as Warrior

by J. W. Gibson

The (Un)Reality of War: Reconsidering Stone's Platoon

by T. Grajeda

"The Russians Acted Like the Russians": The 'Othering' of the Soviet Union in the Reader's Digest, 1980-1990

by J. Sharp

Philosophy of Science? Foucault vs. Habermas

by D. Andrade

Book Reviews by J. Inglis, G. Howard, E. Reece, A. Farr

Illustrations by

Laura Lee Cundiff,

Ann DiSalvo,

Rick Gersony,

Roger Miller

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Greetings from the Bluegrass!

With this first issue, we introduce *disClosure*, a journal of social theory edited by graduate students who participate in activities sponsored by the Committee on Social Theory at the University of Kentucky.

The thrust of the journal is essentially *counter-hegemonic*. By this, we refer to two things. First, we claim that disciplinary boundaries have unnecessarily rigidified and channeled the modern intellectual division of labor since the 19th century. In order to counter the institutional momentum that continues to reaffirm the separations of different knowledges, we felt that a new publication, a journal for multidisciplinary work, would provide an appropriate outlet/focus/site for this type of inquiry. This effort has provided a tremendous learning experience for all involved - and has gone a long way towards addressing that artificial rift between *faculty* and *student* in the contemporary academy.

Second, we are particularly interested in the application of social theoretical concepts to contemporary problems. The intent is to gain a better understanding of our current situation with insights that *demystify* the jargon and rhetoric of current intellectual practice (in the political, academic, or activist spheres).

In this issue, we present several works that show us new ways to thinking about concepts of myth as well as contemporary myths themselves. We open with a wide-ranging work by A. VonHendy, who takes us on a historico-conceptual tour of how our ideas of *what is myth* have changed in literary critical thinking from the Enlightenment to the present. Given the massive conflicting propaganda and geopolitical confusion surrounding the Gulf War, we are fortunate to present two pieces that delve into the mythology of war. J. W. Gibson's piece analyzes the current American fascination with weapons and its connection to the myth of the male hero through a journey into popular military culture. T. Grajeda gets behind the so-called ultimate realist *war-is-hell* film, *Stone's Platoon*, to reveal an unquestioningly pro-military bias in this example of (great) American cinema. J. Sharp draws on insights from literary criticism and geopolitics to inform the myth-making practiced by American popular culture (*Reader's Digest*) as it creates images of the Soviet Union as 'evil other.' Finally, D. Andrade provides an unusual analysis of the contrasts between the thought of M. Foucault and J. Habermas as European thinkers cast against insights in Buddhist thought. For this issue, the book reviews were provided by graduate students at the University of Kentucky. This is only the beginning

of what we hope to be a valuable contribution to the emerging focus of multidisciplinary social theory.

We'd like to give a special thanks to Ted Schatzki, Wolfgang Natter, and John Paul Jones, without whose guidance and enthusiasm this project never would have even been brought close to concrete reality. Also, deep gratitude goes to Laura Lorson, whose vast energies and insights literally carried the journal through epochs of inertia until her departure for dissertation work at the University of Minnesota. In addition, a note of thanks goes to the following for their wonderful ideas and support: George Bebensee, Deborah Dixon, Don Howard, Heather Kennedy, Mark Klar, Tony Krupp, Guyula Pauer (photographic reduction), and Adrian Smith.

Roger Miller, Lexington, 1991

Contributing Authors:

Dean Andrade is currently the editor of the *Milwaukee Undergraduate Review*, a semi-annual literary journal. He has written a Master's Thesis in the Department of American Studies at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee on Christian Utopias in American Literature from the Puritans to the present.

J. William Gibson teaches sociology at California State University Long Beach. He is the author of *The Perfect War: Technowar in Vietnam* (1986) and is currently completing *Warrior Dreams* for Hill and Wang.

Tony Grajeda currently teaches the politics of popular culture in the American Studies Department at the State University of New York in Buffalo. He is writing a Master's Thesis on music, technology, aesthetics, and perception.

Joanne Sharp is a graduate student in the department of geography, Syracuse University, currently working on her master's thesis (representations of the Soviet Union and communism in the *Reader's Digest*, 1922-1990). Her interests are in geopolitics, national identity, political discourse, "postmodernity", and how (if?) they might be related.

Andrew VonHendy is an Associate Professor of English at Boston College. He is currently writing a book on modern theories of myth.

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