Preface and Contents

Caedmon Staddon
*University of Kentucky*

Greg Howard
*University of Kentucky*

DOI: https://doi.org/10.13023/DISCLOSURE.02.01
"the buying and selling of culture"

America is products making better people
disClosure is a journal of social theory published by the Committee on Social Theory at the University of Kentucky. The funding for this issue was provided by UK's College of Arts and Sciences, Student Activities Board, and the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies. Editorial advice and support was provided by faculty at UK.

**Editorial Collective**
M. Martin Bosman  
Leslie Hazelwood  
Greg Howard  
Wolfgang Natter  
Erik Reece  
Ted Schatzki  
Cadmon Staddon  
Kakie Urch

**Editors Autumn 1992 issue:** Greg Howard and Cadmon Staddon

Printed by UK Printing Services; typeset by C. Staddon; copyright © 1992, ISSN # 1055-6133

**Subscription Information:**  
Libraries and Institutions: $10 per issue  
Individuals: $5 per issue

Send Inquiries, Submissions and Subscriptions to:  

disClosure: a journal of social theory  
106 Student Center  
University of Kentucky  
Lexington, KY 40506  
(606) 257-1861 or 257-7107  
E-MAIL: disClosure@UKCC.UKY.EDU

**Editorial Board**
Benjamin Agger, Sociology, State University of New York, Buffalo  
James Boon, Anthropology, Princeton University  
Matthew Edney, Geography, State University of New York, Binghamton  
Paul Feyerabend, Philosophy, University of Zurich  
Nancy Fraser, Philosophy, Northwestern University  
Cynthia Freeland, Philosophy, University of Houston  
Sander Gilman, German, Cornell University  
Derek Gregory, Geography, University of British Columbia  
David Hoy, Philosophy, University of California-Santa Cruz  
Anton Kaes, German, University of California-Berkeley  
Douglas Kellner, Philosophy, University of Texas-Austin  
Dominick LaCapra, History, Cornell University  
Maggie McFadden, Women's Studies, Appalachian State University  
Michael Palmer, Poet, San Francisco, California  
Marjorie Perloff, Comparative Literature, Stanford University  
Nancy Schepet-Hughes, Anthropology, University of California-Berkeley  
Barney Warf, Geography, Kent State University  
Samuel Weber, English, University of California, Los Angeles  
Jim Wenders, History, Appalachian State University  
Irvig Zeitlin, Sociology, University of Toronto

--

**Preface and Contents**

**disClosure #2: The Buying and Selling of Culture**

It is with great pleasure that we deliver this edition of disClosure to you, hot off the proverbial press! Following an enthusiastic reception of our inaugural edition, devoted to the theme of "Rethinking Contemporary Mythologies", we received a large number of excellent and creative submissions for this second edition, on "The Buying and Selling of Culture". We are also pleased to be already receiving queries and outlines of material being prepared for our next edition, which will examine "Fin de Siecle Democracy" - See the inside of the back cover for more details!

Since disClosure was inaugurated a year and a half ago, we have endeavoured to produce a journal which is interdisciplinary and even experimental in nature. We are aware that standard academic modes of discourse delimit that scope of what can be said, often in unhelpful, and disciplining, ways. In this we recognise the exercise of power implicit in Pierre Macherey's observation that "For some things to be said, there are others which must not be said".

In this edition of disClosure you will find poems by Micheal Palmer and Eileen Myles as well as letters from Myles outlining the platform for her U.S. presidential candidacy. In different ways these pieces are concerned with the complex constitution of discourses about the body and national politics (Myles), and about the relationship between aesthetics and the commodity form (Palmer).

Douglas Kellner's essay, excerpted from his newly published book *The Persian Gulf TV War*, examines the subtle and not so subtle ways in which the Pentagon and the Oval Office manipulated media coverage of the US military build-up in the Persian Gulf. In ways which resonate with Noam Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent*, Kellner implies not just that overt manipulation of the press took place, but that the very modalities of contemporary media seem predisposed towards such systematic distortion.

Gary Weisman's essay on conservative interpretations of the "politically correct" takes up some of these same issues. Looking at a number of recent discussions of PC in the popular press, Weisman argues that conservative ideologues have created a hegemonic discourse about PC which portrays it as a profoundly totalising and fanatical social moment - "a radical cnt". By reducing the debate to such arcana as "do I say 'pet' instead of 'animal companion?'", this conservative discourse seeks to derail any constructive attempt to broaden the human conversation.

T.S. McMillin detects a different sort of interpretive impulse in the remarkable popularity of advice and 'how-to' guides aimed at human relationships.
Taking Leo Buscaglia’s commercially successful *Love* (1972) as an archetype, he analyses the ways in which Buscaglia renders love as “a commodity equivalent in status to frozen peas, floor wax, and vine ripe tomatoes” (p.46).

Two more essays, by Trey Strecker and Amy Weissman, examine the ways in which cultural boundaries are manipulated to criticise orthodox, mainstream ideas. Weissman deconstructs aspects of the complex intersection of race and sexuality as they are represented in Jennie Livingston’s *Paris is Burning*. Strecker examines Don DeLillo’s recent forays in *White Noise* into the notion that the process of commodification has at last achieved the complete colonisation of the (post)modern subject. The difference between the two essays though, is that in the latter the protagonist assimilates himself into the “white noise” of the atopic “hyperreal”, while in the former, the men of The Ball carefully negotiate the nihilisms of both total assimilation and total marginalisation.

Michael Pinsky contributes an essay examining the Disney Corporation’s recent venture, *Pleasure Island*, where happy consumer drones can obtain, for a price of course, the anaesthetic effects of participation in a completely artificial historical narrative.

Some of the art which is included in this edition was commissioned especially for *disClosure*. Lexington artists Jim Shambu and those at the PELCE and dadata collectives have contributed several creations which use popular images in a critical and, even, counter hegemonic fashion. The editorial collective is especially pleased to be able to publish such excellent and thematically appropriate art works.

All the volumes selected for review deal with some aspect of commodification and popular culture. We have tried to move more towards the publication of review essays, which by treating several texts in conjunction with one another, reveal much more about each text than would a more standard sort of review.

Again, we are very pleased to present our latest edition of *disClosure*. We invite any and all interested persons to consider submitting work for publication in our next edition, which will be on the theme of “Fin de Siecle Democracy”.

For assistance in the preparation of this issue special thanks go out to Virginia Blum, Peter Mortensen, Jim Wilkinson, Janet Hayes, Michael Palmer, John Pickles and Ernie Yanarella. Thanks also to Chris Carneal and PELCE for the art used on the cover of this issue.

Caedmon Staddon and Greg Howard,
Editors for Issue #2
**Overview: current debates in critical social theory**


**Review Essays**

- Erik Reece on Marjorie Perloff's *Radical Artifice*
- Greg Howard on Drucilla Cornell's *Beyond Accommodation*, Gunnar Olsson's *Lines of Power/Limits of Language* and Rose Subotnik's *Developing Variations*
- Kakie Urch on Celeste Olalquiaga's *Megalopolis* and John Tomlinson's *Cultural Imperialism*
- Jim White on Grossberg, Nelson and Treichler's *Cultural Studies*
- Craig Drennen on C. Mamiya's *Pop Art and Consumer Culture*
- dadata, Artwork: *The Doors of Perception*
- Caedmon Stadden on Mike Davis' *City of Quartz*

**Contributors:**

- dadata
- Douglas Kellner, Dept of Philosophy, Univ. of Texas at Austin
- T.S. McMillin, Dept of English, Oberlin College
- Eileen Myles, Poet and Performance Artist, New York, NY
- Michael Palmer
- PELCE
- Michael Pinsky, Dept of English, Univ. of South Florida
- Jim Shambu, Artist, Lexington, Kentucky
- Trey Strecker
- Amy Weismann, Dept of English, Ball State University
- Gary Weissman
- Caedmon Stadden, Artist, Lexington, Kentucky
- Stillwater, Pennsylvania
- Dept of English, Oberlin College
- Poet, San Francisco, California
- Lexington, Kentucky
- Dept of English, Univ. of South Florida
- Artist, Lexington, Kentucky
- Bryn Mawr College
- Modern Studies Programme, Univ. of Wisconsin at Milwaukee

**disClosure: The Buying and Selling of Culture**