



disClosure: A Journal of Social Theory

Volume 19 *Consuming Cultures*

Article 1

4-2010

Editors' Preface and Acknowledgements

David Hoopes
University of Kentucky

Derek Ruez
University of Kentucky

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.13023/disclosure.19.01>

Follow this and additional works at: <https://uknowledge.uky.edu/disclosure>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)
This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 License](#).




Recommended Citation

Hoopes, David and Ruez, Derek (2010) "Editors' Preface and Acknowledgements," *disClosure: A Journal of Social Theory*. Vol. 19 , Article 1.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.13023/disclosure.19.01>

Available at: <https://uknowledge.uky.edu/disclosure/vol19/iss1/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Social Theory at UKnowledge. It has been accepted for inclusion in *disClosure: A Journal of Social Theory* by an authorized editor of UKnowledge. For more information, please contact UKnowledge@lsv.uky.edu.



Consuming
Cultures

disClosure 19
a journal of social theory

Editors' Preface

As *disClosure* nears its twentieth anniversary, it remains committed to facilitating inter- (and sometimes, anti-) disciplinary discussions of social theory that address, although sometimes indirectly, pressing cultural and political concerns. With *Consuming Cultures*, the editorial collective of *disClosure* has attempted to continue that tradition. The exact meaning of "Consuming Cultures" (like exact meanings in most instances) is difficult to articulate. It refers, among other things, to cultures as both potential subjects that consume and as potential objects to be consumed. For this reason, while the articles in this volume treat a variety of themes from a number of theoretical approaches, each one highlights, in its own way, the imbrication of culture and consumptive practices.

We believe that the pieces appearing here can help us to examine the cultural meaning and value of consumption practices while also interrogating cultural practices situated in circuits of commodity production and consumption. Each contribution has its own specific way of addressing both the cultural implications of consumption and the consumption of cultural objects. Herein, consumption of and by bodies is explored, along with the production and consumption of food, folk art, scholarship, celebrity, cinema, and religion, among other objects.

The call for papers this year elicited a wide variety of submissions including personal essays, creative nonfiction pieces, academic articles and sculpture. Given the long history of work on the subject of consumption and culture in so many critical and creative realms and the diverse nature of the submissions we received, it is clear that this topic continues to inspire people to investigate, reflect, and create. We are excited to be able to showcase some thought-provoking pieces that challenge us to engage critically with consumption and culture.

In "Bodies of Knowledge," Ben Agger reflects on the possibilities of a dis-alienated body politics that would eschew commodified "solutions" to the problems presented by capitalist modes of production and consumption and positivist modes of knowing. Amanda Fickey, in "Commodifying My Culture," discusses her own experiences as a native of Appalachia who simultaneously studies, creates, consumes, and resists a discourse on Appalachian culture that she ultimately finds limiting.

In "Consumed with (and by) Collecting," Gretchen E. Henderson extends Adorno's insight on the self-destructive tendency of creative work to unearth the ways that literary texts can contain within themselves, not only the seeds of their own destruction, but also a tendency to exhibit, for a reader's consumption, their own implication in a broader cultural context. In "Consumption and the Construction of Community in Jacques Tati's *Mon Oncle*," Jennifer Spohrer distinguishes Tati from other mid-twentieth-century critics of consumer society in France and employs his ideas to critique variations of "new urbanism."

The two creative non-fiction pieces that are being published in this year's volume both trace the intersection between tradition, modernity and food. Brendan Edwards' "Invited to the Slaughter" is a reflection of his time spent in Slovakia. Specifically, he explores the disappearance of traditional Slovakian culinary practices in the context of globalization. Alice Driver's "An In-Between Place: To Tokelau by Boat" recounts the author's powerful experiences while living on this small island in the South Pacific Ocean. Her story is a gastronomic adventure as well as a criticism of the effects of modernizing technologies on the people of Tokelau. Hunter Stamps' submission of original sculpture, "Boundaries of the Self," explores the issues of self-ideation, consumption and control by investigating the intersection of self and other, body and meat, attraction and repulsion, and the beautiful and the grotesque.

We are honored to include two interviews with academics who participated in the Social Theory Spring Lecture Series. Joshua Gamson, in an interview with members of the *disClosure* collective, discusses celebrity culture, Hollywood logic and reality TV in the context of the Internet age. Our interview with Deborah Gewertz and Frederick Errington situates the consumption of lamb flaps in a postcolonial context and demonstrates that a commodity chain can reveal much more than a product's material origin.

In "Consuming and Maintaining Difference: American Fans Resisting the Globalization of Japanese Pop Culture" Laura Beltz Imaoka discusses how the popularization of Japanese popular culture in the US has led many American fans to question the extent to which their identities are constructed through the consumption of foreign cultural materials that are increasingly being "Americanized." Andrew Battista's "After the Garden is Gone: Megachurches, Pastoral, and Theologies of Consumption," explores the rise of suburban megachurches and their embeddedness in ideologies and practices of consumption. Rick Dolphijn's "Care, Cure and Control," explore the temporal and spatial logics of biopolitical projects aimed at governing the consumption of food, and argues for the need to analytically distinguish between dietetics as a totalizing and as a generalizing practice. T.D. Richardson challenges the way that Folk Studies has traditionally sought authenticity in "exotic," preindustrial societies. His article is a call for action to folklorists to challenge, what he says, is this field's greatest shortcoming.

All of these contributions, in their own way, ask us to think through the political and cultural implications of consumption, broadly defined. They ask those of us situated in the university to think critically about how we ourselves produce and consume cultural narratives, and they remind all of us to remain attentive to the power relations that constitute consuming cultures. Understanding the implications of what and how we consume has become a key question in contemporary social theoretical work, in part because it is through discourses and practices of consumption (although not only those) that identities are constructed, power is exercised, and political projects are pursued in the contemporary world.

Acknowledgements

There are numerous people that helped to make this issue of *disClosure* possible. The journal would not exist without the hard work and dedication of the social theory students who serve on the editorial collective (listed below). In particular, we want to thank Rebecca Lane and Jeffrey Zamostny for working with us from the beginning to end of this process. We wish them the best as they begin their work as editors of next year's issue. Dr. Anna Secor has been a strong advocate for the journal during her tenure as director of the Committee on Social Theory, and Dr. John Erickson has served as a committed and interested advisor. The editors of last year's issue, James Looney and Karen Kinslow, left us a wealth of useful information and continued to serve as a resource throughout the process of putting together this issue. Naomi Norasak provided vital information, reminders, and administrative support. Rebecca Pittenger and Sarah Wylie Ammerman assisted with copy-editing and cover design, respectively. We thank them all.

Collective Members

David Hoopes is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Hispanic Studies. His research interests include twentieth-century Spanish and Latin American literature and focus specifically on the representation of transatlantic relationships between diasporic peoples.

Drew Heverin is currently pursuing an M.A. in English Literature at the University of Kentucky. His work focuses on the intersection of society and the stage in Renaissance Drama. While serving on the *disClosure* board, Drew also is co-editor of the literary journal *Limestone*, an annual collection of poetry, prose and art.

Clint Jones is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Kentucky. His research interests include social justice, eutopian conceptions of society, and identity politics. His dissertation project is an attempt to bring these three areas of thought together.

Rebecca Lane is a graduate student in the Department of Geography at the University of Kentucky. In terms of scholarly pursuits, she is interested in gender, medical knowledge, and corporeality. She also enjoys thinking about dystopias and the deep sea.

Melissa Moorer is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Geography at the University of Kentucky. Her interests include technology, gender, social theory, psychoanalytic theory, and her current research focuses on the social spaces of medicine.

Ryan O'Rourke, in addition to pursuing a certificate in Social Theory, is also an M.A. student in French in his second and final year. Upon completion of his M.A., he hopes to go on to pursue a Ph.D. in French Studies.

Derek Ruez received his M.A. from the University of Kentucky, and will soon begin work toward his Ph.D. He is interested in critiquing liberal social and political theory from poststructuralist, Marxist, and psychoanalytic angles.

Christine Smith is an M.A. student in the Department of Geography at the University of Kentucky. Her research focuses on issues of policing, community, and illegal drugs within Lexington, Kentucky. Besides social theory, her other interests include art and gardening.

Jeffrey Zamostny is a graduate student in the Department of Hispanic Studies at the University of Kentucky. He examines issues of modernity and sexuality in early twentieth-century Spanish literature. His publications on those and related topics appear in *Decimonónica*, *MELUS*, and *Divergencias*.