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Editor's Preface

Jessica Hollis
University of Kentucky

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A high-angle, black and white photograph of a massive crowd of people, likely at a protest or public demonstration. The crowd is dense and extends far into the background. Many individuals are holding up signs and banners, though the text on them is illegible. In the distance, a tall, thin tower is visible against the sky. The overall atmosphere is one of a large-scale public gathering.

(in)civilities

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Jessica Hollis Editor's Preface

This issue of *disClosure* explores a myriad ways we understand and employ the term "civil," some of the various behavioral and institutional forms civility and incivility take, and the different social realms and spaces in which we see these concepts and forms operating. The inspiration for the title and theme of this issue of disclosure, *(in)civilities*, came from The Committee on Social Theory's Spring Seminar title: "Civil Society / Civic Practice." As the editorial collective began brainstorming a call for submissions for an issue that would explore these concepts, we quickly found that our paths of thought led to ideas that extended beyond the particular concepts themselves to include questions about the various meanings, definitions, and connotations of "civil," its opposites or counterparts, and its absence. What, we asked, were the connects and disconnects between a Western European notion of "civil society" and the seemingly de-politicized definitions of "civil" such as "humane, gentle, kind" (OED "civil" 11)? What forms of civic practice preceded and proceeded such connects and disconnects? In selecting "(in)civilities" as our issue title, we wanted to galvanize critical inquiry into the intersections and bifurcations across and along the boundaries of state/civil society, public/private, personal/political, and conceptual/material. Designing civic space that acknowledges and respects a spectrum of social and cultural identities. In keeping with *disClosure*'s commitment to publishing interdisciplinary work and innovative and nontraditional modes of academic inquiry, we begin this issue with Patricia Price's montage, "Entre Amigos / Among Friends," which employs a range of discursive tools to explore various manifestations of (in)civility at the border between Mexico and the U.S. Through a series of interwoven meditations, images, and poems, Price attempts "to get at ideas and feelings that are elusive, ineffable, difficult to grasp outright" and that evade

traditional forms of academic discourse. Beth Diamond's and Krista Schneider's "Urban Fabric" is, likewise, a nontraditional form of critical inquiry. An entry in Lexington, Kentucky's New Courthouse Design competition, "Urban Fabric" argues for the facilitating role of art and history in designing civic space that acknowledges and respects a spectrum of social and cultural identities.

Two of our article submissions continue these explorations of spatialized group dynamics to investigate the idea of "community" as it relates to citizenship and political practice. Jonathan Lepofsky argues for the usefulness of a radical reconceptualization of "community" to facilitate forms of belonging, identity, and citizenship that are not place based. Jeff Shantz, in turn, discusses the labeling of anarchists and their actions as "uncivil" and points out the irony of such labels in light of many anarchists' commitment to community building not only as the basis of political action but as a form of political practice. Christopher Duncan also addresses the issue of labeling political action (or in this case a lack thereof) to examine the seeming political and social apathy a portion of U.S. youth demonstrate. Rather than rage against the group exhibiting this disaffection, Duncan finds these individuals privately desiring civic participation but hindered from engaging in such pursuits by a "social logic" of futility. Donald Turner advances these discussions of civil society, civic practice, and civility beyond the purely human realm to ask how the concept of "civility" can inform our relationships with non-human animals and to gesture towards thinking about what it might mean to include these relationships in our notions of civil society and civic practice.

Our interviews with Jeffrey Alexander, Martin Marty, and Kathryn Mitchell extend considerations of our theme to include, respectively, reconceiving traditional understandings of the concept of "civil society" by analyzing the complex and dynamic boundary relations between the "civil" and "uncivil" spheres of society; exploring civic "associations" (both in terms of organized groups and voluntary, pre-given, and enforced affiliations at the individual level) ability to facilitate "the common good"; and, the construction of citizens in an increasingly transnationalized world. Finally, our literary submissions from Sara Sahni and G. Wesley Houp offer narrative and poetic renderings of personal and political (in)civilities and their intersections.

We hope you enjoy *disClosure's* contributions to dialogue about civility. In an effort to create more continuity between our annual issues, we also would like to invite our readers to respond to (in)civilities. Selected responses and/or excerpts from them will appear in the next issue of *disClosure*: Pangaea, forthcoming in 2004. Responses can be sent to our address found on the editorial page.

Acknowledgments

If there is one thing I have learned from editing this issue of *disClosure*, it is that the number of individuals involved in the production of an issue far exceeds that of the editorial collective itself. This issue of *disClosure* is the product of the time, energy, and support of many individuals, and on behalf of the editorial collective, I would like to thank those individuals. Professors Ted Schatzki, John Paul Jones, III, and Dana Nelson, our faculty advisors, have generously contributed their time, helpful advice, and encouragement. Other members of the Committee on Social Theory have likewise supported us in a variety of ways. For these contributions to this issue, we thank Professors Virginia Blum, Brian Gran, Tom Janowski, Sue Roberts, Betsy Taylor, and Chris Zurn. Our hats are off to those who assisted us with the editing of manuscripts: Chad Barbour, Tony Brusate, Frankie Finley, Bess Fox, Jim Hanlon, Chris Kays, Melinda Spencer Kingsbury, Meg Marquis, Christine Metzko, Ben Smith, Becky Weaver-Hightower, Jeff West, and Rynetta Davis. We are especially indebted to Shelia Collins and Kristi Branham for their invaluable editing assistance of during the last days of production. Thanks also to Jeff Osborne and Jim Hanlon, who provided helpful commentary during the review process, and Kristi Branham for leading us in our conceptualization of the issue cover. For taking time for interviews and contributing to the strength of this issue, we thank Jeffrey Alexander, Martin Marty, and Kathryn Mitchell. Most sincere thanks go to all of our contributors for their hard work, cooperation, and goodwill over the last year. We congratulate them on a job well done.

The Departments of Geography and English and the Committee on Social Theory furnished us with space, technology resources, and production materials, which are highly valued and much appreciated. In particular, we are obliged to Emily Biggs and Melissa Purdue, the editors of *Limestone*, for sharing their office space and computer software with us during production. Lynn Hiler, Chris Wolcott, and the staff of the English Department supplied us with much needed and valuable administrative support. Thanks also to John Pantazakos at Central Printing for his advice, energy, and availability, and to Lori Melamed at EBSCO Publishing for her patience, persistence, and good humor. Finally, without funding from the Committee on Social Theory, the Vice-President for Research and Graduate Studies, and the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Kentucky, *disClosure* would cease to exist. We thank them for their continued support and faith in this enterprise.

I want to personally thank those who made my job as editor easier and more enjoyable. As the RA for the Social Theory Program, Matt McCourt never failed to ask how things were going, and I drew a great deal of encouragement from this show of interest. Previous editors, Christine Metzko and Paul Kingsbury, provided me with advice, guidance, encouragement, and, perhaps most importantly, empathy during my tenure. I thank them for sharing their time and experiences with me. As the new director of The Committee on Social Theory, Dana Nelson has

not only generously taken the time to advise me on various legal, ethical, and political issues associated with journal editing and publishing, she has been a source of moral support and collegiality for me. Finally, I want to thank my predecessor, Jim Hanlon. From the moment I embarked on this almost-two-year tour as editor. Jim has been my most important source of information, advice, and encouragement. His support sustained my enthusiasm in this endeavor when nothing else did. I am particularly indebted to Jim for his considerable contribution during the final days of production. Without his willingness to share his experience with and knowledge of desktop publishing, you would not be holding this issue right now.