



Editor's Introduction

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BEFORE SPRING BREAK OF 2020, I tasked the *Drover Review* Editorial Board with scoring and commenting on the year's remarkably diverse and impressive body of submissions. I sent out all the requisite files and explained the familiar plan: After break, sometime during the first week back, we would schedule a time to convene, compare notes, and make some very, very difficult decisions about what to publish in the journal's third volume. New year, same drill.

Of course, you already know the looming twist to this story. In-person classes never resumed. The COVID-19 pandemic rerouted USAO and other universities nationwide into makeshift digital spaces, and we Board members—four faculty and two senior students—scrambled to make sense of our new online-only educational experience. As the University necessarily jettisoned so much of its business-as-usual procedure, it would have been understandable—logical, even—to scrap volume 3 of *The Drover Review*, as well, or to delay its publication until 2021. Elsewhere during the Spring 2020 term, my mantra indeed became, “Let’s simplify, simplify, simplify, and get through this.”

In the moment, though, the thought of canceling or delaying *The Drover Review*, volume 3, never crossed my mind. I would have worried, to begin, about letting down the many students who had submitted work to this volume. Amid the COVID-19 upheaval, moreover, this journal emerged to me as something durable, feasible, and rewarding—a small bulwark against the uncertainty and sadness eroding the academic experience for students and faculty alike. To put things a bit romantically: the pandemic can drive us from our traditional offices and classrooms, but it can't erase the good work of USAO's student writers; nor can it erase the circulation of that work through venues like this journal.

So, the Board met over Zoom, deliberated, made some very difficult decisions about what to publish, and things pressed on. Not only was it delightful to see my colleagues' digitally rendered faces checkered across my laptop screen one afternoon, but it has brought me enormous joy and satisfaction to continue working on this journal during this otherwise frightening and uncertain time. I hope that reading, thinking about, and discussing the work the outstanding student authors featured here brings you some of the same feelings of hope and stability.

IN OTHER WORDS, I THINK it's important right now to take stock of things that make us glad and proud. Toward that end, please indulge me as I offer some figures and accolades reflecting the first three volumes of *The Drover Review* and the work that has appeared in their pages.

Since its inaugural Spring 2018 volume, this journal has published now 47 individual essays by USAO students, representing the work of 36 different authors. In addition to the 19 essays from writing-intensive first-year Interdisciplinary Studies classes (Writing I, Writing II, and Rhetoric & Critical Thinking), the journal's complete contents now include 26 essays from upper-level courses, whose disciplinary frameworks include literature, rhetoric, linguistics, sociology, history, psychology, biology, and religion, as well as

interdisciplinary work from upper-level IDS classes addressing topics like life science, economics, political science, literature, and cultural studies. The journal has also published two winning essay submissions for the Betty Baker Jernigan scholarship prize.

A few individual accolades are in order, too. The following eight authors can claim the impressive feat of appearing in multiple volumes of *The Drover Review*, whose publication spots, since the first volume, have been highly competitive:

Kylea Caughman	Summer Laurick
Hannah Freeman	Tia McCarley
Eren Hall	Korbyn Peebles
Wendell Hixson	Emily Rand

Furthermore, two authors claim elite bragging rights by appearing in all three (!!!) of *The Drover Review's* existing volumes:

Baylee Bozarth	Genevieve Gordon
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These ten authors headline a smart, eloquent, ambitious cadre of USAO students, past and current, who have steered the pages of this journal among diverse avenues of intellectual inquiry, reflecting the range of liberal arts experience that occurs at USAO. It has been my privilege to read this writing each year and work with its authors.

THE PRESENT VOLUME of *The Drover Review* subtly revises the journal's previous organizational structure. To better reflect this year's range of publications, the Editorial Board has opted to simplify, breaking the volume into two main sections: one of writing from first-year IDS courses (Writing I and II, plus Rhetoric & Critical Thinking) and the second encompassing upper-level work from across the majors and disciplines.

The First-Year Writing section includes six entries that cumulatively demonstrate a vast range of writing carried out in USAO's

freshman-level IDS courses. Kitty Lancaster provides a very fitting introduction to this section with her bold defense of liberal arts education, which she likens to a “forge” designed to fortify the weapons of communication and critical thinking against outside manipulation. In “Quiet,” Scotty Hinds next offers a meditative and poetic personal essay about the experience of divorce from the perspective of a child. Kati Robbins and Savannah James then contribute two sharp researched arguments; Robbins’s “With Liberty and Justice for All” deals with the pernicious infiltration of religious preference into public education, while James wrestles with the common but vexing trope of the “Mad Artist” in science and culture. Next, the first-year section includes the anonymously published but deeply powerful “End the Stigma,” a personal account of sexual abuse and its devastating effects on mental health. Wendell Hixson’s “Her Dear Smile,” finally, rounds out the section with a thoroughgoing, inventive literary analysis of a comic story by Aldous Huxley.

In the Writing across the Disciplines section, readers will find eight scholarly works spanning the disciplines of religion, sociology, literature, economics, and political science. Claire Smith’s pithy essay “Buddhism as a Solution in the Western World” kicks off this section with an endorsement of Buddhist *sunyata*—or voidness—as an antidote to the West’s frenetic, individualistic materialism. Kylea Caughman and Hannah Freeman then offer two sociological essays, Caughman’s “Dividing Labor” offering an eye-opening comparison between hetero- and homosexual couples’ labor distribution in the home while Freeman’s “The Stigmatization of Addiction” surveys research on how to identify and mitigate the social shame of addicts. Next, initiating a collection of literary and textual analyses, Rhianon Quillin’s “Nothing Is Something” examines how the conventions of architectural Minimalism augment the tone and characterization of Haruki Murakami’s novel *A Wild Sheep Chase*. Summer Laurick, in “The Racism of Misrepresentation in *The Last Airbender*,” then poses a trenchant critique of M. Night Shyamalan’s film for whitewashing the Asian-inspired cultures and characters

from the animated series it adapts. Next, in an especially clever and inventive look at the *Harry Potter* universe (and perhaps winning my vote for best essay title to every appear in this journal) Baylee Bozarth's "Psychoanalyzing Draco Malfoy: A Queer Werewolf?" intellectually substantiates fan theories that Harry's rival is really a lycanthrope, and one of great symbolic import. In the final literary analysis, "Reproductive Nostalgia," Genevieve Gordon then contrasts the tropes of pregnancy and natural birth in classic and modern dystopian narratives, noting and validating a skeptical feminist shift against the romanticization of traditional childbearing. Wrapping up the section is the first mutli authored essay to appear in *The Drover Review*: Emily Rand, Caitlyn Hatfield, Mikaela Malloy, and Shelby Strangfeld, in "The Struggle Is Real," weigh their own revelatory calculations about minimum-wage budgeting in Oklahoma against the assumptions of various political ideologies to examine where beliefs and economic realities meet.

Finally, this volume also includes Hannah Dawson's essay "The Impact of Social Inequality in the United States of America," which identifies privatized healthcare, incongruities in law enforcement, and the cyclical problems of poverty as impediments to America's claim to be the land of opportunity. Dawson's essay is this year's winner of the Betty Baker Jernigan Endowed Scholarship Fund, which, each year, offers \$1000 to the winner of a contest open to qualified continuing and incoming USAO students. *The Drover Review*, in order to publicize the contest and celebrates its winners, also offers to publish winning essays like Dawson's.

AS ALWAYS, I OFFER A necessarily abridged thank you to everyone across campus who has made this journal possible. Thanks to Editorial Board faculty members Shelley Rees, Tonnia Anderson, John Bruce, Genevieve Gordon, and Emily Rand, for your intelligence, reason, and flexibility—and, in particular, for navigating around the COVID-era impediments to make this volume happen. I offer further thanks to Emily, who, before graduating cum laude from USAO

in April, served as the English department office's work-study and helped enormously to publicize the journal, both around campus and on social media, during the 2019-20 academic year.

Thanks, as well, go to faculty and staff who have supported the journal and to faculty across the divisions, majors, and IDS program who integrate intellectually sophisticated writing into their classes. In addition to Editorial Board members, faculty whose coursework yielded submissions to the 2020 volume include Alex Coleman, Jennifer Long, Chris Garneau, James Finck, Zachary Simpson, Aleisha Karjala, and Alex Kangas. My gratitude extends, as well, Steve Weber for his continued patronage of this journal and Beckie Brennan for her enduring help through the Communications and Marketing office.

Most of all, though, thank you to the students who have submitted writing to this volume. Publication spots in the 2020 volume proved even more competitive than usual, so we had to turn away very strong work to winnow the volume down to the usual size. This reality reflects the sweeping breadth of smarts, wisdom, and bravery seen in student writers at USAO.

And as always, thank *you*—the readers of this journal. Good writing wants to be read, so let's go. ►►