

Editor's Introduction

“There is no royal road to science, and only those who do not dread the fatiguing climb of its steep paths have a chance of gaining its luminous summits.”

—*Karl Marx, Preface to the 1872 French edition of Das Kapital.*

Now in its third volume, *Royal Road* has become a major enterprise at the University of Tampa. What began as a series of hallway conversations about student research has matured into a regular publication involving dozens of writers, reviewers, mentors, and editors. Beyond showcasing outstanding student work at the university, the journal now serves as both a pedagogical tool, and a resource for other researchers: Ally Marter, published in volume two, experienced the joy of her first citation last year. In our 2015 proposal to establish the journal we did not envision anything so ambitious, seeing it instead as a way of emphasizing the research focus of the Academic Writing program. This remains at the core of the journal’s mission, of course, but its broader success is due to the hard work of our authors and their mentors.

And it is hard work. As we have formalized the editorial process over three volumes, we have also developed increasingly high standards for publication on the strength of past articles. Out of close to 2000 eligible student essays, about 100 were selected for a first round of review. Of those, the editorial board chose 14 to send out for peer review. We then invited those authors to take on the challenge of revising their work in collaboration with a faculty mentor. As those who have gone through peer review can attest, this step can require more work than the initial research and writing—often demoralizing, too. What were already excellent student essays underwent significant revision under tight time constraints: the writers took on this work in addition to their fall courses. The resulting six articles represent weeks of work doing additional research and rewriting in response to their peer reviewers and in conversation with their faculty mentors. This can be a grueling process for authors and editors alike because the merely excellent may

be some distance from the publishable.

Our expanded editorial board has enabled far more individual mentorship of our authors. Our initial ad hoc process among the three editors has given way to a more formal structure that pairs each writer with a member of the board. The larger board has also made for a more rigorous first round review, with each essay receiving three separate reads. This year Sarah Fryett, Cari Hovanec, Kyle McIntosh, Steve Mollmann, Ashley Palmer, Josh Waggoner, Aimee Whiteside, and Daniel Wollenberg shared their time and expertise with the journal and its authors. My co-editors Joe Letter and David Reamer respectively coordinated the faculty reviewers and mentors, and typeset the journal. We are also indebted to the dozens of Academic Writing professors who submitted work from their classes for initial consideration.

The labor and attrition of the process is the point: good research is hard work. *Royal Road* takes its title from references in the negative to the imperial route of ancient Persia. Scholarship, unlike the historical path, is rarely direct or speedy. At the heart of the Academic Writing courses from which these articles are drawn is the cultivation of research as an activity that must be undertaken in stages, and that we produce knowledge by building on what has already been established. The deliberate rigor of the selection and revision processes continues this emphasis on the iterative development of scholarship. However, we also challenge our authors to strive for lucidity, so that what may not have been a Royal Road for them may become one for their readers.

The articles in this volume range in topic from prison labor to urban history, reflecting the breadth of interests fostered by our Academic Writing program. Our opening essay, "Acoustic Assault," offers a gripping discussion of noise pollution in the world's oceans. Emma Stange demonstrates that commercial and military use of the oceans can have catastrophic effects on marine life. However, she argues that these effects can be practically mitigated or avoided through legislation and education.

Taylor Brunson's contribution, "The New S-Word," engages the long history of prison labor in the United States. She pro-

vocatively argues that the contemporary prison-industrial complex—which produces many common consumer goods—is a legacy of slavery and the persistence of America’s unresolved racial prejudices. Ambitiously, Brunson links prison labor to the demands of consumer capitalism to call for systemic economic and political change.

Continuing the theme of discrimination and consumer goods, Raylea Hagan’s “Blind to the Impacts of Colorism within the Cosmetic Industry” examines how the marketing of beauty products subtly reinforces racial prejudices. The article engages both the economics of cosmetics and the consequences of racialized representations of beauty to call for an immediate shift in industry practices.

Daniela Gutierrez Andrade’s “Beauties in an Ugly World” also tackles questions of media representation. By looking at three centuries of adaptations of the fairy tale *Beauty and the Beast*, the article traces how the tale’s eponymous protagonist reflects contemporary expectations for women. Despite noting significant evolution in the figure of Beauty in the most recent Disney retelling, Gutierrez Andrade argues that the film still misses the mark on proactively addressing underlying issues of women’s agency in the story.

In a move to recognize women’s agency in the public sphere, Marissa Henderson’s “Ann Lowe” recovers the story of a major American designer. Henderson not only introduces her readers to the outstanding career of Ann Lowe, but also addresses the obstacles facing African American women in the fashion industry and beyond. The article stresses Lowe’s lifelong desire to challenge racial prejudice, including in Tampa.

Our city is the subject of the final article, “From Swampland to Sophistication.” Marcella Benner argues that Plant Hall of the University of Tampa, originally the Tampa Bay Hotel, set the city on the path to significance in a globalized economy. The terminus of Henry Plant’s railroad, the Tampa Bay Hotel spurred the development of the then-sleepy town of Tampa by connecting it to the transportation network of the nation and beyond.

I am sitting in this building as I write this introduction, surrounded by more than 9000 students from over 130 countries.

Tampa today is a destination for commerce, leisure, and education. Our hope is that this journal exhibits the best of what the University of Tampa has to offer. These articles are scholarly, political, and polemical, addressing the issues of the past and present while envisioning a better future, both locally and globally.

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