

Editors' Introduction

We are excited to present the seventh volume of *Royal Road: A Journal of Undergraduate Research*. This edition features seven essays written during the 2021-2022 academic year and revised in the 2022-2023 academic year. Passionate student authors under the mentorship of faculty cultivated essays across a range of topics. Each essay crafted by our authors and refined by mentors and editors reflects the enthusiasm for the pursuit of research and academic study. We would like to thank all of the faculty members who oversaw the initial creation of each manuscript and the mentors who helped refine them after they were selected for the journal. We are also grateful to Dr. Joseph Letter and the editorial board for selecting these manuscripts, and to Dr. David Reamer for his guidance throughout the construction of this volume.

The seventh volume of *Royal Road* represents the wide and ever-growing lens of research at the University of Tampa, which diffuses across a variety of subjects. One key theme of this edition is modern issues in healthcare, and students have researched a variety of pressing issues in this field. Emma Sheehan's "Human Germline Genetic Engineering: The Ethical Imperative in Due Time" questions the ethics of genetic editing and makes a case for a temporary moratorium on this practice. "Beyond Baby Blues: Systemic Failures in Maternal Care" by Alice DeCoteau explores the struggles of attaining maternity care during the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequences that stemmed from these challenges. Then, Faviola Collazo-Vélez explains the benefits and important factors involved in pet ownership for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in "Animal Companionship for Children with ASD: The Physiological, Psychological, and Socio-Emotional Benefits."

For readers interested in media, this edition also includes a variety of critical media analyses that explore how media reflects capitalism and society. Marin Burke's "Finance Is a Gun: Capitalism and the Gangster Film" views gangster films

through the lens of capitalism and neoliberalism. Meanwhile, “Selling Masculinity: The Perpetuation of Fragile Masculinity in Advertising” by Madeleine Bolivar Ortiz explores harmful depictions of toxic masculinity in modern advertisements. Both of these articles showcase the powerful ways in which modern media can comment on larger societal issues.

One final theme of this volume of *Royal Road* is environmental issues that affect our current world. These issues hit close to home and reflect key problems within our environment. Ashlyn Ellison’s “Sustainable Subterfuge: How Greenwashing Hinders the Ability of Consumers to Choose Environmentally Sustainable Companies” dives into how greenwashing and false advertising affects consumers. Destin Rothe presents an analysis of the causes, effects, and solutions for sea level rise in Florida in “Is Florida Taking Sea Level Rise Seriously?” These articles showcase familiar, relevant, and pressing environmental issues.

All in all, the seventh edition of *Royal Road* is a window into some of the topics and issues that matter most to our student authors. Each essay reflects the passion of our authors and shines a light on an ever-changing world that shows us where we are and where we are going. We are so proud to present this volume of *Royal Road* and celebrate the work of these students. We hope you enjoy!

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