

*Reason Papers* at Fifty Years

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We were with Tibor R. Machan, the founder and first editor of *Reason Papers*, from the start. He made clear his intentions in founding *Reason Papers*. He certainly did *not* want the journal to be devoted exclusively, or even largely, to Ayn Rand's ideas; that the *Journal of Ayn Rand Studies* was later established seems to confirm that his goal was achieved. However, Machan did want *Reason Papers* to be open to the exploration of issues raised by Rand as well as many other classical liberal, libertarian, and conservative thinkers, though the provenance of these explorations could be from just about anywhere. Most importantly, Machan wanted the essays that appeared to be rigorously argued, not the rationalizations of a "true believer." It has also been the case that many essays and discussions in this journal have not directly related to topics in the political or legal thought of Rand, classical liberalism, libertarianism, or conservatism. In keeping with the journal's subtitle—*A Journal of Interdisciplinary Normative Thought*—there have been essays dealing with epistemology, ontology, metaethics, normative ethics, philosophy of science, economic methodology, and specific thinkers such as David Hume.

Much has been accomplished in the pages of *Reason Papers* over the past fifty years. We cannot begin in this brief comment to provide an adequate account of what has been done. The two of us, both individually and together, have contributed pieces over the years: twenty-five in total, including this one. We certainly got more from this journal during those years than we gave to it. As a way to honor that, we want to highlight several of the essays or symposia from *Reason Papers* that we each found especially helpful to our own philosophical growth:

1. James Buchanan, "Boundaries on Social Contract," *Reason Papers* 2 (Fall 1975): pp. 15–28.
2. Frederick Will, "On Universal Ignorance [A review of Peter Unger's *Ignorance*]," *Reason Papers*, 3 (Fall 1976): pp. 99–107.
3. Thomas A. Russman, "Selective Perception," *Reason Papers* 7 (Spring 1981): pp. 21–32.
4. Fred D. Miller, Jr., "Rationality and Freedom in Aristotle and Hayek," *Reason Papers* 9 (Winter 1983): pp. 29–36.
5. Eric Mack, "Against Agent-Neutral Value," *Reason Papers* 14 (Spring 1989): pp. 76–86.
6. Steven Yates, "Self-Referential Arguments in Philosophy," *Reason Papers* 16 (Fall 1991): pp. 133–64.
7. Daniel Shapiro, "Liberal Egalitarianism, Basic Rights, and Free Market Capitalism," *Reason Papers* 18 (Fall 1993): pp. 169–88.
8. Nicholas Dykes, "Debunking Popper: A. Critique of Karl Popper's Critical Rationalism," *Reason Papers* 24 (Fall 1999): pp. 5–25.
9. David Kelley, "Rand versus Hayek on Abstraction," *Reason Papers* 33 (Fall 2011): pp. 12–30.
10. Symposium: David Kaspar's *Intuitionism*, *Reason Papers* 37, no. 2 (Fall 2015).

This list provides a good sense of the diversity of topics and approaches a reader can encounter in the pages of *Reason Papers*. That diversity certainly helped us grow intellectually. This can specifically be pointed out in regard to some of these essays. For example, Buchanan's essay helped us to see both the strengths and limitations of social contract thinking. Russman's essay aided us in better understanding the case for perceptual realism. Miller's essay assisted us in seeing the role of practical reason in both economic and ethical rationality. Mack's essay provided strong support for our contention that what is valuable need not be agent-neutral to be real. There have been many ways in which this journal aided us in our intellectual journey.

Finally, it almost goes without saying that we are grateful for all the opportunities the editors of *Reason Papers* have afforded us for the presentation, investigation, and discussion of our own works, including symposia about three of our coauthored books: *Liberty and*

*Nature: An Aristotelian Defense of Liberal Order* (1991); *The Perfectionist Turn: From Metanorms to Metaethics* (2016); and *The Realist Turn: Repositioning Liberalism* (2020). To be a part of the conversation hosted by *Reason Papers* could not have been more rewarding for us.