

Letter From the Editors

Entitled “Tension and Transformation,” this year’s edition of *Aleph* creatively utilizes the humanities and social science disciplines to confront societal frustrations, systemic suffering, and related cultural nuances. This theme was inspired by our experience as students during a period of political polarization and social reckoning in the United States, clarified and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, we draft this letter in the wake of *Roe v. Wade*’s overturning. In short, tension is high and transformation is necessary.

With this theme in mind, this year’s submission form asked authors if and how their work related to the ideas of tension and transformation. We allowed for research subjects of all kinds, desiring a diverse publication and anticipating how a theme might contribute to the journal’s overall cohesion and impact. We did not predict that our authors’ submissions and responses would be so strikingly pertinent to this moment in time.

Our authors write about technology’s relationship with healthcare privacy and the far-reaching implications this relationship can have for vulnerable communities. They write about the inequity and financial pressure created by unpaid internships, augmented by the accessibility of financial support programs. Our authors write about “the historic and consistent exclusion and neglect of women and their health needs,” exploring how female health autonomy can be restored. They address strains between LGBTQIA+ people and the larger communities they exist in, as well as cultural contexts of Bolivian musical history, a Taiwanese ethnic feud, and so much more. We are proud of their determination, enduring curiosity, and insight.

For authors and staff alike, the year was challenging due in part to UCLA’s changing hybrid operations. *Aleph* staff switched back and forth between in-person and online collaboration, often with short notice. Similar to the year prior, flexibility and improvisation were required.

Despite the challenges, we built upon past editions by, for the first time in *Aleph's* history, tying our research collection together under a conceptual theme.

Thank you to our authors, developmental editors, copy editors, and Editorial Board for their dedication and can-do attitude. Thank you to our faculty advisor, Jacquelyn Ardam, and graduate advisor, Shouhei Tanaka, for their sincere, patient, and empowering mentorship. A special thank you to our graphic designer, Laura Grombone, who brought the concept of tension and transformation to life on our cover.

We hope this edition inspires students to pursue research in the humanities and social sciences and encourages readers to creatively participate in social impact efforts.

Sincerely,

Marisol Huerta-Ontiveros & Celena Castelnovo-Tedesco
Editors-In-Chief, 2021-2022