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Letter From the Editor

Just do the best you can. No one can do more than that.

— John Wooden

In many ways, the eighteenth edition of *Aleph* can truly be called our COVID-19 edition. While for the prior edition we had to deal with the shock of rapidly adjusting to an all-online structure at the end of the publication cycle, and while the nineteenth edition of *Aleph* will likely tell a story of readjusting to in-person life, the eighteenth edition is entirely a product created under the unique challenges of this pandemic. At no point, from fall to spring, could we rely on the same set of procedures that had guided us in years prior. The Editorial Board had to completely rethink much of our approach to meet these challenges. This naturally meant being more digitally organized, changing from in-person meetings to mostly asynchronous online meetings, and even a rethinking of our outreach efforts, ultimately leading to the creation of the *Aleph* Instagram account and the establishment of our blog, Research Ruminations, by Eva (Yanqin) Li.

Key to all of this, however, was the dire need to be flexible and to improvise at times. The prior holder of the Editor-in-Chief position, Hannah Barrett, found inspiration in the Arthur Ashe quote “start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can”—reflecting, to my own memory, just how much improvisation was required of us at the end of our seventeenth edition in order to get it through the start of the pandemic. In turn, I have taken my cue from John Wooden’s dictum “Just do the best you can. No one can do more than that.” Sometimes, in situations like these, all any of us can do is our best with what we are dealt.

I believe that we at *Aleph* have excelled yet again despite these tremendous challenges. I am proud of the immense work that our Editorial Board, our staff, and our authors have put into this edition. I am even more proud of the resilience we as a school, as Bruins, have shown throughout this past academic year. Despite the inevitable fatigue that

social isolation and online classes bring, I still saw students conducting research, enthusiastically participating in discussions, and reaching out to one another both within *Aleph* and without.

I hope you enjoy the outstanding works that live within these pages, from discussions about musical representations to analysis on the construction of identities and political structures. I also hope that you view the cover of this edition and see the work that Laura Grombone, our graphic designer, has produced. To me, the colorful depiction of students once again populating our campus serves as a current source of hope for new life after this pandemic—a testament to the collective challenges we as a school faced this year, so that future classes will know that this is the edition of *Aleph* produced in what truly will become historic times.



Ari Fahimi

Editor-In-Chief, 2020-2021

