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## Introduction

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# Introduction

## Introduction to Volume 3, Issue 1 December, 2016

Although this year's volume consists of one issue rather than two, it maintains the interdisciplinary approach upon which the journal was established. Five diverse and thought-provoking articles explore aspects of cultural encounters, conflicts, and resolutions. The authors discuss Palestinian presence, American Muslims, Israeli and Arabic literature written in Spanish, aesthetics in Confucian ideology, and contextualizing math/science instruction for multicultural/diverse classrooms.

In the first article, Francesco Melfi discusses *Responsibility and Judgement* and other works by philosopher Hannah Arendt, considering the paradox of her political behavior and her philosophical writing. He examines the caesura that occurs in the interval between taking off the mask of one's persona and putting it on, in light of Arendt's work and drawing on selections from W. G. Sebald, Larissa Mansour, Emily Horne and Tim Maly. Melfi argues that the ontological presence of the Palestinian people in *Responsibility and Judgement* is a representation of the roles of masks, in the Greek sense. Palestinians do not take a central or protagonist role in Arendt's work, but rather they remain largely hidden in a world that is controlled by other external imperialist forces. Melfi argues that the Palestinian people have been relegated to the role of "extras" on the stage of the drama of the Holy Land.

Next, James Moore's article on American Muslims discusses the status of Muslims in the United States and how their assimilation compares and contrasts with that of other minority groups in the country. The article examines several aspects of assimilation, not limited to religion, race, and national identity. Our current political environment continues targeting people from different racial and religious backgrounds; however, Moore takes an optimistic approach based on our traditional values of democracy, and our commitment to pluralism and freedom.

The third article of this issue also takes an optimistic approach. Kenya Dworkin y Méndez discusses the anthology *Caminos para la paz: Literatura israelí y árabe en castellano* to examine the role of the Spanish language in a collection of stories that consider the representation of Jewish and Muslim issues in the world. Spanish becomes a symbol of unity, and a common space in which to create a dialogue between the two cultures and religions. Spanish is not only a means of political expression, but also a way to express cultural differences, ideologies, and conceptions of the world.

Conceptions of the world are also the focus of the fourth article. Li Wang and Haibo Ding examine the concept of order in Confucian aesthetics. They begin by illustrating that this concept of order has been embedded in the culture since ancient times, as indicated in the writing system. The beginning reflection on Chinese characters moves to the concept of order in Confucian ideology and aesthetics and how they are manifested in family and social relationships. To conclude, they compare and contrast the concept of order between Chinese culture and the Western world, and the impact of Confucius's views on all of humanity.

Roland Pourdavood reminds us that the Western world has not been the sole source of scientific and mathematical knowledge. He discusses issues related to teaching and learning math and science within a multicultural, diverse context. He argues that, when teaching math/science, teachers need to consider the cultural background and

history of the students, in order to provide meaningful contexts for the students to engage in and integrate the material. His investigation analyzes data collected through reflections and presentations of pre-service teachers, and he is able to identify some of the challenges related to teaching contextualized math and science and considering cultural differences.

All five articles examine the role of cultural and ideological differences in today's world. Our ability to examine and find ways to understand differences and resolve conflicts helps us to have a broader perspective and perhaps a more sympathetic understanding of the diversity around us, near or far in time and/or distance.

Last, we draw attention to a different consideration regarding time and distance: In October, 2017, we will have our 7<sup>th</sup> *Crossing Over Symposium* at Cleveland State University in Cleveland, Ohio. The symposium is not only an opportunity to gather scholars from different parts of the world—with multiple perspectives on cultural encounters, conflicts, and resolutions—but also is an opportunity to continue the growth and development of this journal. Further and specific information will be available in forthcoming emails and on the *CECR* website at

<http://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/cecr>

We will happily welcome your session proposals. And, as always, we welcome article submissions through the website at any time. We hope that we see you in October, 2017 and that, meantime, reading the articles in this edition may prompt an idea for a session or for an article.

**Antonio Medina-Rivera and Lee Wilberschied**  
**Editors**