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# INTRODUCTION

By Cezar Ornatowski and Michael V. Williams

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In the post-September 11<sup>th</sup> world, we seem to be living, like Shakespeare's Macbeth, in a "time out of joint." From the genocide of Bosnia to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict we seem to be surrounded by an increasingly fractured world. But many among us have always lived through fractured identities, fissures, and diasporas and bore witness to their lives through literature, art, and action.

The 2002 Crisis Carnival conference explored the cultural politics and discourses of fracture and healing, of conflict and reconciliation. Papers, performance art, and other forms of exploration focused on discourses (literary, political, religious, media, and other) that dealt with issues of cultural conflict and/or cultural reconciliation, from the U.S. - Mexico border to Central/Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. We explored the problematics of fissures, borders, conflict, cultural identity, and so on through analyses of a wide variety of discourses and forms of expression.

The works published in this proceedings of the 2002 Crisis Carnival Graduate Student Conference are textual reactions to current social phenomena. They comprise a small sampling of how we interpret and connect to our world using text as a medium. The 2002 presenters stretched outside the typical borders of their respective disciplines, striving to go beyond the self-referencing character of much literary academic work. They all risked being unconventional, which contributed to the diversity and enjoyment of the 2002 Crisis Carnival.