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SECTION INTRO: Reverberations of Connectedness

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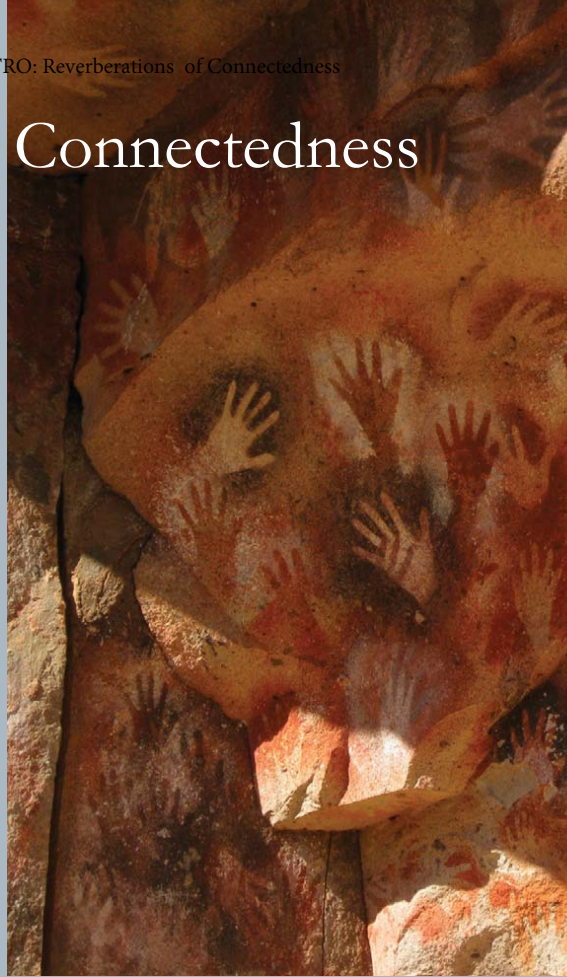
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SECTION INTRO

Reverberations of Connectedness

Making the trek from my last class to the basement of Hendricks Chapel, I feel the cold March wind blow through the evening air, and it stings my neck and face like bits of abrasive fabric slapping my bare skin. It is 5:43 p.m. I am alone and in desperate need of coffee. I walk quickly and struggle to bury my head in the collar of my coat. Yet, I hesitate for a moment as I pass by the high-rising stairs of the iconic chapel because next to them, I observe a seemingly undressed tree fiercely illuminated by an artificial glow from the streetlamp behind it. The tree branches extend radially in a network system of woody dendrites—infinately small and endlessly complex. Even the tiniest branch is a part of this momentous whole, an offshoot of the massive trunk that fixes each limb in its place. This image resonates in my memory as a reverberation of connectedness.

Finally, I make my way to the chapel. As I cross the entryway from the outside, a flood of familiarities bombard my awareness. I linger by the staircase for a minute, listening to a lingering melody of the chapel organ that floats down the staircase, slowly and gracefully hovering, only just audible. The organ notes are broken by intervals of noise, laughter bursting forth from the Noble Room, a cluster of even-toned musings from the vicinity of the Muslim Students' Association, and the dissonant sound of a radio presumably hiding in the headquarters of People's



Place. A pervading smell of coffee saturates this space; and, it ties the threads of discord together. I feel at home at once.

The images of the tree and the chapel space are quite different and yet both echo a perception of community, whether natural or constructed. In this issue of *Intertext*, the positioning of community as a framework for question and change is threaded through several pieces. Our writers do more than bring to life an emblematic resemblance of community, they test the boundaries of those which they have participated in or are interested in. Our writers build, tear down, and ultimately



“Old hand prints in Mexico” by Flickr user
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reconstruct the metaphorical walls of these communities to reduce the complexities of the group to a concentrated essence which fixes together individual members. At the crux of their thematic vision, our writers search for the trunk of the tree that unites its branches. And they find it. Readers will be able to decipher in our writers’ works the adhesives which bind communities together; and, he or she will experience how each writer exerts a push, an impulse of tension, just at the borders of these interlacing ties.

Here, in the Writing Program, we sustain a sense of community, one that unites students,

instructors, and community members alike. To reduce us to an essence, a concentrated core, might seem impossible. The diversity in this department is profound. But, in my opinion, the trunk of our tree, the connectedness that moves us all in the same direction, at least in some aspect of our lives, is an innate impulse to live our lives suspended in a world of words.

—Margaret Spinosa, Editor

Community is one of life’s best intangibles. It surrounds us both figuratively and literally, but no one could ever pick it out of a scene like “Where’s Waldo?” It has no real identity, and I think that’s my favorite part about it. Community lies in the eyes of the beholders. You. Me. Even that guy in the coffee shop who always wears too much aftershave. We all hold a special bond with each other, but the bonds are different. Though these contrasting views hardly matter, what’s important is that we all feel connected through something. It might be a space, an area of interest, or a simple matter of taste.

With the latest issue of *Intertext*, we hope to extend that feeling of harmony on the page. By grappling with writers’ individual senses of community, the authors inadvertently create a community amongst themselves. Hopefully, you will all respond to their work for different reasons and join their web of ideas.

—Flash Steinbeiser, Editor