

Tapestries: Interwoven voices of local and global identities

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Editors' Note

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Editors' Note

Madison Tuggle and Sophia A. Aimé

As we come to the end of 2020, it seems cliché to repeat what so many others have said, but it can't be avoided: 2020 was a weird ass and exhausting year. As it stands now, over 300,000 people have died from COVID-19 in the United States, violently racist systems of policing and false justice continue to hold power over the lives of black and brown people, and Joe Biden has been confirmed as President-Elect. With this context, the seven of us approached doing our capstones over Zoom, in seven and a half weeks, with no small amount of trepidation. From the moment we began talking about this process, to now at the end of it, our conversations always centered on how much of ourselves we were going to be able to give and bring to our articles. What did heart-centered writing with a timeline look like? How were we going to do this in a way that allowed us to dig into our ideas and the work of writing while still taking care of ourselves in the ways we needed? It was with these questions in mind that we began to connect together a theme that all of our writing engaged with: care work. And as we thought over the networks of care in our lives and what we could imagine them to be through our writing, we came to the concept of mycelium: the unseen connections beneath the earth that make up part of the life cycle of fungi.

Simply put, mushrooms release spores, which can then germinate into branching filaments called hyphae, which then connect with other hyphae to form the network called mycelium. The mycelium can then grow mushrooms, which can release spores and continue the cycle. Mycelium has been called "Earth's natural Internet" by mycologist Paul Stamets, due to its support of microbial communities inside its own microcavities, which helps the growth of a large number of organisms. Mycelium also holds the soil of the forest floor together, despite being 30 times smaller in mass, produces compounds that have been shown to support the immune system in humans, and acts as "the mother that is giving nutrients" between trees and plants by mitigating the transfer of nutrients of all those around it.¹ While this may seem tangential, what we saw in mycelium echoed our varied understandings of what makes up a network of care, what sustains it. As you will see in the articles of this publication, care can mean different things to every person, and that meaning shifts all the time as we grow and contexts change. Some constants, as we can see with mycelium, are support and connection. Care can come in the form of mutual aid as we stand in solidarity to uplift and sustain impacted

¹ Paul Stamets, "6 ways mushrooms can save the world."

communities; it means recognizing and combating the toxins impacting society such as systemic racism and classism.² Care also means doing the work dedicated to the wellbeing and safety of our future. While humans may seem to stand tall, solitary, like mushrooms dotted across the landscape, our connections beneath the surface allow us to take on more than we know, to be able to heal and grow together.

And just as mycelium is able to break down toxic substances like diesel and petroleum waste and give rise to new life and vegetation, so too can we as people use our varied skills and yet collective strength to dismantle harmful systems and encourage the sustained growth of our communities. Through care work we learn about each other and recognize that how our identities make us whole, the kind of self-care that can't be commodified.³ In our writing, there's a lot of processing and identification of the harm that is built into our society, but just as important as this naming, is also working to build what comes next; such discussing the deep-rooted issues in our system of juvenile imprisonment, along with designing program designed to heal the communities affected by it.⁴ In her book *Hope in the Dark*, Rebecca Solnit also looks to mycological metaphors, stating that just as mushrooms can seemingly appear overnight, "Uprisings and revolutions are often considered to be spontaneous, but less visible long-term organizing and groundwork - or

underground work - often laid the foundation." Through care work and justice, we embark on a journey towards a restorative and healing society.

Thank you to Professor Karin for her grace, wisdom, and guidance throughout our writing experience. Thank you to Professor Claudette Webster for advice on heart-centered writing and being proud of one's work. Thank you to Louann Terveer, Dave Collins and Jacki Betsworth for guiding us through the logistics of creating the journal and making it accessible to all. Lastly, thank you to our peers of the Seminar for words of encouragement, reflection, and critique, all are necessary to create this very project.

Here's to the Macalester Class of 2021 for experiencing a year full of celebrations and joy, challenges and grief, growth and more. Here's to a generation of 'youngsters' who entered their college experience under President Trump administration and departed with hopes and some worries over the next four years with President-elect Joe Biden. Here's to the students who graduated January 2020, we see you and we are proud. Here's to the students who may (or may not) know what they're doing after graduation, but just want to be happy and financially stable. Here's to the first generation college graduates, to the international graduates, to the Black and Brown graduates, to the LGBTQ+ graduates, graduates with disabilities and many more. Here's to a brighter and happier future!

² See in this volume: Adele Welch, "Root networks of radical care: Mutual aid in Minneapolis' abolitionist movement"

³ See in this volume: Cleveland L., "Disruption as Care Work"

⁴ See in this volume: Sophia Aimé, "Are Juvenile Prisons Obsolete?"