



Center for  
Humanities Research

## **Connecting/Not Connecting: Formations of Community, Solidarity, Alienation, Antipathy** (April 27-28, 2023)

A virtual symposium hosted by the Center for Humanities Research, George Mason University

Keynote address by Professor **Seyla Benhabib**, Eugene Meyer Professor Emerita of Political Science and Philosophy at Yale University on Thursday, April 27 with panels on Friday, April 28

### **Call for Papers**

The Center for Humanities Research at George Mason University invites proposals for papers that interrogate connection or its inverse, failed connection, in any of its iterations or materializations across time, space, media, and discipline.

The idea of connection has multiple valences, critical and utopian, historical and contemporaneous, affirmative and constrictive, for the humanities. Connection also shades over into “community,” a term whose apparent desirability bears within it, inevitably, its opposite: forms of exclusion and non-belonging. “Community” can empower people through forms of social and political solidarity, it can serve as a foundation for people’s sense of belonging, and identity, but it can also demand conformity. Similarly, notions of communal or collective responsibility can serve as the basis for recognition of structural ills and their redress, but they can also serve as the basis for group stigmatization and impulses for discriminatory actions and violence. Communities can be undone through acts of violence, through ideological provocation, or through the struggle over territory. Equally, they can be undone by the slow attrition wrought by social-economic forces (such as gentrification, the passing-away of unions, the loss of jobs or the demands of new forms of labor), by the transformations wrought by environmental and demographic developments, the emergence of a disease, the impact of climate change. “Community” offers us an important category for thinking about experience, but it can occlude other imaginative possibilities for working or living together, or for understanding social and cultural dynamics. We invite papers addressing any of these themes or the following:

- the affective, political, performative, linguistic, or material dimensions of connection, or its opposite, anomie and alienation
- non-community forms of connection, such as “networks” or “allies and alliances” or “institutions” (parties, unions, corporations, civic and or religious groups)
- the implications of the technological/digital/virtual, broadly construed, for community—or its opposite, alienation.

Please submit a brief paper proposal/abstract (no more than 500 words), along with a brief CV, as a **single PDF file, clearly labeled with your last name leading (ex. Smith CHR Symposium Proposal), by noon ET on Wednesday, November 30, 2022** to [chr@gmu.edu](mailto:chr@gmu.edu).