

Meredith Oda

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Hi, everyone. Thank you for joining us here for our Core Humanities *Thought on Tap*, our monthly series. Today we're going to be looking at building legacies of social justice and activism. And thank you all so much for coming here tonight pushing through your I'm sure, very intense zoom fatigue at this point to join us for our panel tonight So building legacies of social justice and activism.

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So the panel is part of the *Thought on Tap* public engagement series, brought to you by Core Humanities here at UNR and the College of Liberal Arts and Laughing Planet. I'm Meredith Oda. I'm a professor in the history department. So this year in the *Thought on Tap* series we've been exploring legacies in the fall we looked at confronting corrosive and harmful legacies and now in the spring returning to more optimistic ground, and we've been looking forward, forward with building

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legacies in health and healing and equity in education. And then next month, and economic empowerment. Today we'll be exploring people working to build legacies of social justice and activism. So, this past year, I think we can all agree has been both disheartening and also supremely inspiring and a lot of ways, as we've been faced with both chilling incidents and kind of vast structures of injustice, such as the horrific murder of George Floyd, whose deaths were now terrifyingly be living in the current trial of his killer to the ravaging of black, brown and indigenous communities by COVID.

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But what we've also seen, I think, is new and longstanding activists and organizations rising to confront and dismantle these and justices and local communities across the nation and around the world. So this evening. We're going to talk to some of those activists, people who both study and work in social justice movements. So please join us for our conversation with these activists who are working on behalf of detained migrants with the Black Lives Matter movement and for other causes as they described their work and the work of other activists here in Reno around the United States.

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And again, all all over the world. So our first panelist, I'll introduce you to this evening is Escenthio Marigny Jr. Escenthio has been an organizer for over 10 years; he's

previously organized around environmental justice, education and state police violence. As an undergraduate here to help to found the real Reno Justice Coalition student organization. And currently, he's a master student in the Department of gender, race and identity, at UNR where His research focuses on comparing how black movements and Colombia, and the United States respond to and were impacted by the war on drugs.

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We also have Dr. Satsuki Ina, who is a writer activist she heard a very long list or writer activist therapist specializing in community trauma and professor emeritus at CSU Sacramento. She was born in the truly late Japanese American segregation center, and has produced two seminal films. If you haven't seen them I would encourage you to read about the Japanese American World War Two incarceration. Children of the camps and from a self cocoon. She is also one of the co founders of sue for solidarity, a group that we're going to hear more about shortly so I'll let her tell you more about that.

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And also just FYI, you can find a recent piece that she wrote, published in Time magazine last month, calling for the end to migrant Child and Family detention. Next we have Dr. Prisca Gayles, a sociologist and the Department of Sociology gender, race and identity here at UNR, who specializes in race and ethnicity, social movements migration and citizenship transnational block feminism's and the African diaspora in Argentina. She received her PhD in Latin American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, and it's held fellowships from Williams College, the Fulbright Foundation and the Tinker foundation.

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Currently, she's working on an ethnography of how emotions. For me the macro and micro politics of Argentina's block social movement, and then behind the camera that will see leader is Dr. Daniel Enrique Perez, and he is the Associate Dean of diversity and inclusion at the College of Liberal Arts and a professor of to Chicano and Latino-X studies in the world languages and literature's departments who researches and teaches on Chicano and Latin-x cultural productions queer theory masculinity and transnational and migration studies. He's going to be moderating the chat for us this evening and also passing on any questions you might have for us on the panel.

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Alright so this evening I'm going to open up with a few questions, but I do encourage everyone in the audience to raise any questions that you have, you can just drop them into the chat or unmute yourself later to our panelists represent a range of experience

and expertise, so please do join in and help us direct this conversation. So I'm going to begin and this is to everybody, I'd like to open up broadly with just asking you for kind of a brief description of what social justice activism means to you and how you came to it. Tell us about the causes that you advocate for and how you came to be involved in social justice movements? What drew you to them and what kind of activated you in the past?

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So maybe we could start with Escenthio and then we can turn to our other panelists.

Escenthio Marigny Jr.

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Oh my, hello, everyone. Thank you for being here tonight. So I think for myself. I'm originally from Oakland, California. So my activism and organizing started from, I think, you know, being in proximity to a lot of movement, things that were happening in the bay. I think what really sparked it was. I was in high school, around a time, you know, that there was this second push the government put it on to the Iraq war so there's a lot of anti war movement things going on. There was also a lot of fight for immigrant rights going on.

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And, you know, just also being around people fighting around issues of education in schools so I think what really pushed me was, you know, being introduced to these ideas to movements and mentors and organizations I just happened to come across. And also my own experience right so I finally found something in these movements and mentors and organizations that put them into context. The things I was saying in my own life, in terms of, you know, talking about the war on drugs and how that started the policy that initiated that you know my family's experience with being in relation to the welfare system and how the humanities, all

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These different things kind of really bring a proximity to a movie to allow me to radicalize me and radicalize my own personal experience so I'll stop there because I can go on for life.

Meredith Oda

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I forgot there's so much Bay Area Connection here this evening I think we all have one. And let's see Satsuki. Can I ask you to go next?

Dr. Satsuki Ina

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So I'm here from Oakland California Escenthio. So, my legacy actually in the social justice section comes from the fact that my parents were removed from their homes. Shortly after Pearl Harbor was bombed in 1942. They were placed in American concentration camps, and I was born in one of those camps. And so, I am known as someone who was born doing time. And so much of the story of my parents incarceration experience in my communities experience was one so traumatized but also so distorted through government narrative that the true story of what happened to my family was something that I have spent my

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lifetime trying to uncover. And I think it led to my decision to be a psychologist, and eventually to focus on community trauma. So, I think so many events have led to this, the older you get, the more events, shoe along the path so I'll just cut to the chase on it. It was in 2015, that a young Japanese American whose parents whose family grandparents were actually held at the to be like segregation center where I was born, was working as the ACLU attorney and called me to say that in this was 2015, the end of the

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Obama administration said that children and families were being imprisoned at this in South Texas, and there was very little access to what was going on in there and he asked if I would go undercover for ACLU as a religious visitor, so that I could go in and evaluate the trauma that the children were experiencing. So, I don't even speak Spanish, but we had a priest who sat next to me and we turned our backs and we managed to manage to interview several mothers and children and found the experience so disturbing.

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Children actively traumatized and mothers who were still breastfeeding their babies that cross the border to save their babies lives essentially. And so then shortly after that I went, I went back several times and one of them was to protest another one of the South Texas family detention facilities and when I was there I realized that just 40 miles west of where I was standing in front of this duly family residential center euphemistically called was where I had been incarcerated, with my mother and

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brother separated from my father, under indefinite detention for not ever having committed a crime but having the face of what they considered the enemy and realized how parallel and how resonant, the current treatment of people seeking asylum in this country were being treated. And so, since that time, we have been actively involved in an organization that was started by people like myself in their 70s 80s and 90s who had been children in the prison camps during World War Two. And it's called Tsuru for solidarity. I'll turn it over to you.

Dr. Prisca Gayles

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Thank you. Wow, I'm really honored to be in your presence, that's an amazing history. I think so much of my activism also stemmed from my personal experiences and my history. And so I think you asked what social justice means to us how he came to social justice activism and then our current work. So to answer that first question. I think that for me what social justice means is recognizing that any quality doesn't just exist for no other reason for no reason at all but it has to do with historical factors that were in many ways intentional and to undo those injustices in those

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in terms of inequality we have to reckon with those historical factors and actively work towards systemic change. And so in terms of my, I would say the first time I would become involved in social justice. It was also in high school. I'm also from Oakland, California. Right. I didn't realize we were all gonna be from Oakland, California, but as I grew up I suffered very, very badly from asthma. And I remember at one point I couldn't I couldn't play on the basketball team. I couldn't do a lot of things because my asthma was so bad and I remember going to the hospital one time that I had to be hospitalized.

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And the doctor was asking me about my siblings and if they had asthma and I was that very inquisitive child and I said, Oh, is it hereditary and the doctor said, No, just African Americans suffer at higher rates from asthma and I thought, well, there has to be a reason why. And so part of that with the work that I started in high school was really working to educate folks in West Oakland on how to recognize triggers, how to train like that you can play sports so swimming is one of the things.

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And so part of the work that I started in high school was this working with middle school and elementary school children in West Oakland on how to recognize and stay away from triggers and so part of that was doing some environmental justice work, although I didn't realize it at the time. And that's kind of what I did, up through high school. Also in high school I fell in love with magical realism and so I was going to, and then discovered that it was so much more beautiful to read Gabrielle Garcia Marquez in Spanish than an English and I majored in Spanish, and then I went to Cuba to study.

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Jose Marti, who was a big philosopher, but also was a poet and so I went to Cuba with a rare opportunity to study in Cuba to study the poetry of Jose Marti. racial justice. So while in Cuba as a study abroad student I was the only African American student from, from the University of Pittsburgh that's what was going on at the time. And every day and when I say every day I'm not exaggerating it was every single day like while walking to North Carolina, with my peers. The police would stop me and say, listen, you're not Muslim incarnate, which means Show me your ID, and that one

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time I just like broke down in tears and I got really exactly and I said, Why does this happen to me every day and he said, one of the officers. With all due respect you, you look Cuban and Cubans often tried to like mooch off tourists like paraphrasing, and for me that was very that was so paradoxical because Cuba is a very multiracial nation and I thought, it's not just that I look Cuban it

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that I look Afro Cuban. And so I start to ask questions and not for nothing, like many of the folks that I spoke with in Cuba said no no racism still exists. We're not allowed to say that but and so that's kind of that was my entrance to different racial schemas right. And so then, so then, on another study abroad trip I was actually studying the roots of the tango. It is where I started in Argentina, I started, I met activists, working in the movement there.

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And that is a movement that is so invisible and studies and conversations of racial justice. And so one of my questions was what does it take to be heard and to be visible and to be successful in a place for folks that you don't even exist. And that's the current work I do. I'm part of the gender section of a black social movement, the black look explicitly black feminists section of that social movement in Argentina and, and I'll leave it there for questions but it's kind of a trajectory of my activism.

Meredith Oda

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Thank you so much I mean I think there's so many cross sections here just sort of geographically but also I think obviously thematically too. So could you all talk a little bit about kind of some of the actually I'm kind of interested I want to just go off something that you said just now Excenthio that draws off Satsuki just mentioned in terms of, you know, your background really pulled you to your career as a psychotherapist and dealing with community or sort of long term trauma. I'm wondering to what you brought as an activist yourself prescribed to your, your academic work, how does that actually this is to you to Escenthio, How did

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you how did your work as activists in your in your, I don't know, you know, IRL and you're really outside of academia, inform how you then understood your academic work and this would actually be for you as well Satsuki

Dr. Prisca Gayles

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Did you, did you want me to start?

Meredith Oda

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yeah if you don't share if you don't mind.

Dr. Prisca Gayles

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And so, um, I think for me, I really don't see my activism, as happening apart from my scholarship. And so it's interesting because once I was at the University of Texas and that you know, that's part of the activists research program you read this Austin school Manifesto. And so I think for me, for me what scholarship or what intellectualism is is questions about how the world works. And so for me my questions about how the how the world works or not, both in terms of physical science natural sciences social scientists,

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they're not separate in terms of what we can do to make the world better and so I think for me, like my activism, whether it was, what can I do to make African American children Oakland experiences of asthma like help help them live a fuller life are tied to my questions of how can we better understand how racialized systems reproduce themselves in different ways, but still, no matter whether it's the United States, the system of racism the United States and different countries throughout Latin America

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and South America and Europe that still, still lead to really disenfranchised social indicators for non white people. And so I think that really I don't see my activism and my scholarship as separate even though I don't see them as like two things come together it's like one thing so does that help answer your question.

Meredith Oda

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Escenthio do you wanna go?

Escenthio Marigny Jr.

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I'll Wait.

Dr. Satsuki Ina

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Okay. Um, I think it's a wonderful Preska that you are so aware of, because I think so. I would never have thought about my educational experience as having much to do with activism although when I reflect back now I see that I wasn't necessarily surrounded by activists, but I was reacting to the education that I was given. So, my doctoral dissertation was on the need to develop cultural competence in therapists who were providing particularly marriage and family counseling, because so much of my psychology training was euro based and values of, you know, family structure, family history, types of interventions. And so

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I think that my. If I had had you know connections with other people who were activists who were using the language and the framework for activism, I would have been able to define myself more clearly but I felt like I was kind of on a road by myself. And, so much so that I won't tell you what school I went to but during my doctoral dissertation. I had a

committee member question the fact that there was actually racism in the world. And then I had to spend several months, getting him off my dissertation committee.

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So of course that was many years ago, but. So, but I think how it impacted my career, eventually I realized that my interest. I established a clinic to provide services, this is in Sacramento for low income clients, and I realized that the clients that were coming in one by one the themes were still repetitive. The consequences of oppression , internalized racism, all of these kinds of things and so gradually, I moved out of doing one on one individual therapy to look more at the larger system.

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And, and then got engaged in being involved with communities that we're dealing with trauma related to racism and work more as a consultant, organizing systems and setting, creating environments where people could talk about the issues that were confronting them that what the topics and discussions that they weren't having before to make changes in their own personal way of surviving racism in their organization or in their church or in their agency, but also how, how to change the culture of the system. So, yeah, I'll stop there. Go ahead, Escenthio

Escenthio Marigny Jr.

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And the question again is How did my personal experience and scholarship?

Meredith Oda

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Oh yeah how your experience as an activist helps to inform your scholarship, your research questions and how you approach it.

Escenthio Marigny Jr.

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Well, yeah, I think it's like this is constant back and forth right like, you know, in high school, first on to push back against the anti-war movement. Not because it's like some idealize like oh that far away, because I, you know, actually, the more you know they were at my school they were recruiting students of color right. They used to call it some of the conscientious objectors I used to organize with who will miss mentors of my

colleagues, poverty draft and and I'm thinking to myself, you know, this is one of those aha moments.

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Y'all want us to go find somebody else on the other side of the world. And we ain't got no damn decent library pardon my language we don't have a decent library, you don't have you I mean like police are hitting people up. People are dying, you know all these different things in our neighborhood that just didn't make sense. So, to me, my scholarship was like how to, how do I make this make sense. There's so many contradictions. I why you know, why aren't people finding that they are back or maybe I'm not seeing it like how we are able to, you know, patriotism and fervor for war happening you know this is what I'm thinking in high school.

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But our conditions are so, so terrible and traumatic, in some ways, right. So, in terms of my scholarship and other questions I started looking at I started going to places that we try to make that make sense to me, you know, and that ended up you know I was early on involved with I you know nonprofit organizations I end up going a little bit more left will say that, and getting involved and reading some a gentleman named Karl Marx, came into the fray.

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And then, you know, Harry Haywood and all these other figured coffee zones and you know these kind of radicals, some of them comment on it all the thinkers, they started make sense to me because it's like well this system is so bad and I'm trying to make sense of like we needed. Something has to go right in my high school mind. I still hold fast to some of these beliefs, I think, in a different way.

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So yeah, I think, trying to make sense of the contradictions that I saw while engaging, you know in organizing talking to fellow high school students about the war why that makes people like Why should I even care about what's happening. Put that right. And that's the question I have to sit down and think about right are talking about issues around education and you know, so I had to start thinking about time.

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Well, we're spending all that money over there but looking at the education system we have here, look at our neighborhood so it really forced me to kind of dig into books or respond to the concrete things that were happening in my community and then in my own life. And so now you know when I'm thinking about either my thesis now, you know

what I'm trying to move towards, you know, if you can't I don't think you could deal with the issues.

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Just locally right, what I've come to find out is that the systems are global. I mean they take on different dimensions right so I think, you know, when I'm just going on now y'all. I'm gonna say this and then we'll move on. So I think my scholarship has been influenced by my interactions on the ground with other people who organize around issues and then try to make sense of my own experiences as well. And even pushing beyond. You know the things that I do know.

Dr. Satsuki Ina

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I want to just comment on Escenthio, what you're saying is that the fact that your activism started in high school is remarkable to me. Because at the time that I was in high school there was nothing called ethnic studies. And I think about my high school years. You know where the most important thing we had these white book skin shoes. And the most important thing was whether you had enough powder in your little bag to to whiten your shoes with, and those were kind of that was kind of level of of what we talked

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about in our circle. And what I'm finding now is talking to the next generation of young people who have a leg up on examining things the way you have begun in your high school experience so I'm really, That's one light of hopefulness.

Meredith Oda

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And actually that's a lot of you both a sense you and sky You both talked about coming into activism pretty early. And that was kind of notable. So could you talk a little bit about kind of. And so, you know, We have a kind of spread of generation here. Activism so could you talk a little bit too about kind of. Where, where, sort of mentors came from in activism? Did you seek out? Did you find it? Did you encounter mentors in your community in organizations that kind of helped you move forward what kind of support systems, I guess, did you find from among previous activists, you know, long standing organizations.

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And we can flip this for Satsuki as well like how you have. I know you've done a lot of work kind of with youth organizing and providing that kind of mentorship and scaffolding for new generations.

Dr. Prisca Gayles

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I guess I can start because I was trying to think of like who were my mentors when I was like doing this work with, like I was volunteering with the American Lung Association I was in the California advisory board and and I was thinking, who was my mentor and really it was, it was my mother, who was just very supportive of like my mother raised, she was a single mom and and there was quite a few less but like she got me to every single me to San Francisco to meet with that California advisory board.

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She got me down into the deep West Oakland to volunteer at the y and teach like asthma training sessions. She sought out more opportunities for me and so I think at least up until up through college. My mom has been one of my major mentors in terms of things like supporting, what I want to do, and my interest in activism and it's so ironic cuz at the same time. My mom is the one who like when I was seven she was like I used to say, at seven that you were going to be a cardiovascular surgeon, so there's no seven year old who says that so I knew you were going to be so like, while I was like 23 like majoring in

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Latin American Studies my mom was telling people like oh she's in med school I'm like, I'm not so it's ironic because she simultaneously like had this dream for me to be a cardiovascular surgeon, but simultaneously like literally like broke her back to make sure that I could study the career that I wanted to volunteer when I wanted to study abroad when I wanted to so I think in terms of like, because mentorship is sometimes like information. But my mom. My mom didn't go to college like hers was support and then access to like opportunities in the way she's a powerful networker. And so I think that most certainly in terms of like when I think about mentorship is like this kind of holistic

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like providing information helping to see new ideas but also like that, that emotional and psychological support. My mom was my mentor, and then as as I got into for example my research in Argentina, it's interesting, and it the the folks who were mentoring me

were older Afro-Argentine women who had been kind of the social movement emerged and 2013 but these are women who had founded like black activist organizations in the 1980s shortly after Argentina's military dictatorship ended and civil organizing was allowed and so there wasn't really repressed. And so it's interesting is I think for me, that, that, that mentorship or that guidance but older African time women also helped me reconcile with this questions and issues that I was having around positionality

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that desire to share to say like, yes go write about this in English, read about them in Spanish to be right about them. This is an English because we have been, we've been. We've been involved in this activism for 40 50 years and people don't know that they exist right and so that was so in terms of that they were giving me information Oh, here's what you need to talk to if you want to find out like when the government created this commission.

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Here's you will talk. If you want to find out the truth about it you know and so and so for now so it's interesting I see it. I think mothering is a one of the ways I look at mentoring and that it might just be because so many black women have done like I have participated in, like, I think of mothering it's like care work right. And so this radical form of mothering that has been really helpful to like the opportunities I've had but also the things I've learned, and also some of the new questions that are emerging now.

Dr. Satsuki Ina

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So it's interesting to hear what you're saying. Because, you know, I'm 77 years old, and so I feel like my experience was still under the veil of having our whole community traumatized from the incarceration. So, our way of responding to our freedom after four and a half years of being incarcerated, was to not cause any problems, not ask any questions to just do what you're told. Keep your head down and don't cause any problems and that was the message from my parents, so much so that even though I was at UC Berkeley during the Free Speech Movement and the birth of the civil rights movement, surrounded by

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people talking about Malcolm X, and, you know, there was so much vitality around the possibility of speaking out, and people were organizing but I got phone calls every night from my parents saying, we do not want to see your face in the newspaper, you are not to protest you, we have saved our money so you could go to college so you could have

a good career. You go to class. So, you know, like a good Japanese girl. I went to class and I remember really crystal clear the day that I was walking to class, and all the things were walking in the opposite direction by saying their gate.

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They were all going to hear the speakers and be part of the protest. And I went to class, sat down, there may be three or four other students there in a class that you know usually has 125 students, and the professor came running down the aisle jumped on top of the desk and turned and looked at us and said God damn it. If you show up in class I'm gonna flunk every single one of you. And I was frozen.

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You know, my pleas from my parents to not cause a problem. And it led to actually, I mean, my awareness now is so clear about what they were living under this fear that if we cause any problems we could immediately be imprisoned again. And so when I went home and talked to my parents, I said well what is all this about and that's when they told me the family secret which was that they had renounced their American citizenship during their incarceration.

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Having lost all faith in the American world, they wanted to take their children to Japan, although they were American citizens. So, Yeah, I think the fact that the generational difference like I didn't become an activist, pretty much until you know I was 70, and a quiet activist prior to that, but still under the veil of the trauma that had inhibited our expression of ourselves.

Escenthio Marigny Jr.

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Thank you for sharing that with me to be honest panels. Y'all to want to, I just want to listen to y'all. I feel like I was very fortunate in many ways. I really resonate with what Dr Gayles talks about in terms of, you know, another role as a mentor, like my mom and my was very much. My mom and I were very much. I you know I didn't think about that at the time but you know I've got notice I Oh, they gave me a lot of gems that kind of really, you know, helped me in life and in terms of organizing and, you know, I think we did organizing,

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we think of it as like it has to be all theory all these, sometimes it's about building relationships and talking to people. And, and that's at the root of and I think sometimes

we kind of, you know, the lessons I learned in terms of building with people I think I really got that from them, stress in my life. But then I was also fortunate because you know it's a bay area so something's in the water. You like one person away for some it was the X Factor.

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You know there's some sort of organizing or something. And so, you know, having to go to high school there and being vocal may not necessarily be involved with the invocation with our place of having mentors come to me and invite me to other students sometimes I invited me to events. You know, I had a English teacher who did terribly at a high school and I transferred to another one. And I had, you know, makeup credits and what he did was like over the summer, I want you to read.

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Rest of the earth or France and on, I want you to watch Battle of Algiers. I want you to read so the black folk, and you don't want you to write. I bring that up to say like that's pretty. You don't always get that in high school. Right. And there was intellectual mentorship and a sense right and I think was important. I think it's also like you know. Bill's other favorite as well who taught me how to organize and you know I'm kind of brash, you know I can be I've been trying to dial back. So, you know, teaching the pack.

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And, you know, how do you relate to people, how do you deal, like, it's not just about the environment you have to listen to. You know what I mean and not being the, you know, in communication and community with people when you're building so I feel fortunate to have several mentors who play that role in high school, you know, even to this. Now, I am a graduate student.

Meredith Oda

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Actually we have a couple questions coming in here. So, let's see I'll start with Olive, she has a question and she's asking what is your opinion of working within the system to enact change? And what advice do you have for people who are just starting their journeys into activism? Well that's great so I guess you turn around and pay it forward a little bit.

Dr. Prisca Gayles

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I wouldn't mind starting with this one. Um, so I mentioned before talking about how I'm not seeing my activism as separate from my scholarship and how at the University of Texas we read this piece called the Austin school manifesto which is about activists research. And then one of the, I think one of the questions that it is asked, Is that very question. And so I I recall a lot.

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Not like an argument but a really heated discussion. And my first black studies theory class at University of Texas at Austin, and we were, we had read on the Lord's peace the master of the mind the Master's tools. And so the professor you know re asked that question that Audrey Lord asked like what does it mean when the tools of a racist patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of that same patriarchy. And so they went into this like you know how the ivory tower can never, you know, and then he, and then so we talked, we go on and on about, you know how we're part of a system that is part of the problem.

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And so we talked about it on and on and on, and then the professor just sits there and then we kind of come down and then he says, well then what are you all doing here. And we kind of didn't have an answer to that. Right. And so we started, I think that that is a question that I constantly think about. And then he kind of helped us and so like when we talked about how the Lord, then goes on to say that it's really when you are that that notion of using the Master's tools to dismantle the Master's house, means that only the very smallest parameters of change are possible.

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And so for that for me what that means is two things, it means that it is important for people to be working in those institutions to be trying to see change because you know it's going to happen very very small, very incrementally and very slowly, and it's ever the more important, but also what that means for me is that my, my commitment to social justice and social change can not only happen from within the institution. And I think that's, that's a huge part of why I do participant activism like whether or not I'm writing a paper for a journal I'm in contact with the, with the women I work with in Argentina, every time I go back, before I ever tried to schedule interviews,

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I'm like, on the ground, what are we working on, are we writing letters are we organizing a protest. And so for me I think that working within the system is important, but it cannot be the only way that we work toward social change.

Dr. Satsuki Ina

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I'm definitely agree with Christina that well for me maybe their stages of working inside the system. For me, It was a university system, and incremental change felt very small To me, it was. It felt like a struggle. And, but it has to happen. I'm, I much rather work outside of the system. Now, you know, I, I don't have much to lose now I don't have to worry about getting tenure or anything like that anymore.

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So, I really am luxuriating in the freedom of working outside of the system and of critiquing the systems, but also nurturing educating young people who have to live in the system have to work in the system who, who, with a different orientation towards you know what has to be taken for granted and what what needs to be challenged. is the way that I have some connection to the internal system that needs constantly to be pushed. And I think for me the promise is the young people coming up to become faculty to become administrators to lead with the values of, you know, a new Democracy, so.

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Yeah, I'd like being old frankly, it feels really freeing and I have to say in our to do for solidarity. Most of our organization is composed of older people like myself, who are, you know, who've spent most of our lives fitting in to not cause problems. And you know what, what happened is we lost. In my generation, we don't have a lot of artists creatives, musicians, artists, actors, because our parents were so live so fearful after they're released that we were all channel to become doctors and optometrists and people who could create security really to protect our parents, and to guarantee that we would not be cast out again.

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And so in that way there was this constriction and the loss of a lot of our creative energy. So, as old guys now like you know, we don't give a damn. We are, we are speaking out, we are doing what we need to do what we feel like is so important and wanting to inspire young people to do what they can inside, while we work on the outside.

Meredith Oda

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And I would just like to add I was at the Association of Asian American Studies conference earlier today, or at, and I just, I happened to see a video of thoughts key baiting a military police officer to arrest her as they stood she doesn't put just stood stood on the Fort Sill site, a potential or a potential that was going to be a place where they were going to hold child migrants unaccompanied minors. And so yes I can attest to the fact that I witnessed what that freedom, I guess gives you.

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And then, Escenthio, do you want to add?

Escenthio Marigny

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yeah i mean i think it's it's something I've struggled with I think I've like I've mentioned before I worked in nonprofits have also done like radical collective work you know outside of you know, nonprofits kind of antagonistic to certain forces right, not just the antagonist because we you know, the particular analysis we had of limitations. You know I think now I'm like

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I'm of the mind is gonna be a multi pronged attack, but also have no illusions, you know, I think you are right that you know you are in a position in institution or, you know, we're capitalists everywhere I know nobody got clean hands so what type of system that kind of, you know, some of these pants are bloodier than others but you have to innocence, pick your poison I think that sounds terrible. Let me rephrase that one time by what I think there's a truth to it right.

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I think for me, I think, constantly be critical to understand the systems and institutions you're working with. The biggest and most dangerous thing that people can do is neither be naive about what they're going to get from the elections, but they will get from being a certain institution. Because if you take a lesson I think, you know, and everything will change. You have no I don't think understanding of how this works. You want to use an election campaign to talk about issues and kind of change the narrative and build like an actual basis one thing right. And it's nice to have people in certain positions inside who agree.

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Yeah, I mean, who may be able to help deal but to me. but to me. I'm all about this might, you know, I'm not gonna knock anybody from working in institutions I'm in an

institution now as a graduate student, you know, I mean, I think you have to have this multi pronged attack or also think there needs to be be interested in this moment now, a tendency to try to build our economist organization from people who are not necessarily,

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you know, and it's hard to do, where to foundation funding, where two political parties that can actually put pressure, I think, on these various levels of power. Right. And that doesn't mean that people can't be in institutions that work within the system or multiple systems will also think we got to be honest about what they do, the limits of it and don't fool yourself, you know, otherwise and in terms of what one could do.

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Now, I think just try, just go out and try and organization, right, be able to set your boundaries. Get people, some places will burn you out, just because it's a movement space does not mean it doesn't have issues either so don't come in, you know, be aware of that, but go and try things out talk to people don't network. Just give it a shot. There's no like nobody has a perfect answer because we wouldn't be in some situations we can.

Daniel Enrique Perez

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Meredith I can chime in now also to add some of the questions that have appeared in chat or in. In the question and answer box but thank you all for this conversation you are truly truly inspiring people and I just want to add a question here from Carlos Martin's he's a student in CH 203. And he wants to ask if you can talk about what you like best about the work that you do? And how would you educate the public about certain issues that are going on in our world like racism and other problems? Anyone want to respond?

Dr. Satsuki Ina

00:49:14

Yeah, I like this standing up against a military officer that is six feet tall and telling them we're not going to move. Actually, the thing I love best about the work is actually working with the young people. We are an artist in an organization of intergenerational folks, and so inspired by young people we just did a panel that included a 12 year old 14 year old two 17 year olds, talking about ways in which they are learning about the injustice in the world and then the actions that they are taking. I mean, really remarkable

young people and during that time one of the young people decided that he wanted to use

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that moment to raise funds for one of the panelists who's actually living in sanctuary. And thanks to his effort. We raised \$6,000 for, you know, 15 year old Yvonne, so he could buy new shoes and and clothes because he is growing so fast right now, but he just spent his fifth year in sanctuary from Guatemala, with his mother. So that's, that's the best part, that's the part that I like the most I feel like that's the, that's how the work will get carried on is when you make space for the young voices and

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share your story so they can carry on the story that gives them the background for why they should be speaking out. And that's why, Escenthio, it's so important that you're here today.

Dr. Prisca Gayles

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Um, yeah, that was a wonderful question Carla Thank you very much. So, I think I'll start with the second person. The second question, but how we educate the public about certain issues that are going on in the world like racism and other problems now I think conversations like this are right, we, it's, it's, aside from the work that we do. That's part of our career with writing and publishing right, having conversations, not only in academic institutions, but with community members.

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I after I got like a number of requests for radio interviews in Argentina, after the murder of George Floyd and so like that was one way of sharing about not only racial injustice in the US but also to take that platform of a national radio nationally syndicated radio station and Argentina say, and there's also a racism that occurs and police brutality occurs in Argentina and these ways in form so I think really just taking the time to recognize how important dialogue is, you know outside of like the

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job description and so that's kind of one of the ways that I hope that I'm educating others about the work. And then, I think that the question about what I like best about my work is a hard question because it's really hard to study. It's not, it's hard to study racism, it is the interviews or gut wrenching that witnessing it is painful.

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But I do think I think it's not for nothing that I study emotions and social movements. And I think of one of an interview that Alicia Garza did talking about Black Lives Matter and talking about how buy this house spaces of activism really just create how the act the very act of countering and justice creates innovation and imagination and black joy, and that is something that isn't kind of one of the immediate successes of the movement, and something that I saw have this one chapter I talk about.

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After a conversation with Shapiro Wells, who's one of the Chicago mothers, a group of black women who have lost her their children to police violence, talking about pain to purpose and how activism really gave her reason to continue living and to find joy again in life, and I recognize it like this is what the women that I've been interviewing in Argentina are saying as well. When they felt like that this place of like an impasse where they couldn't make sense of what was happening to them every day

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just walking down the street and how their activism is the joy that comes from that community and and I think it's serious social movements, it's referred to as emotional in process benefits. And so I think one of the, I guess one of the things that I enjoy most about the work that I do is that, not the work that I do the work that activists do is that by bringing other people in the movement there helping them see that, you know, another

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way as possible and that is so crucial and movements were, like, for example, most of the people that I know weren't involved in racial justice movement, don't necessarily believe that there's going to be real systemic change in their lifetime. Right. And so that finding that creativity and imagination and community is so important, and also feels good, so.

Escenthio Marigny

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Yeah. So I haven't, you know, been organized for some time, but in the last couple years I've health and other reasons I stepped back and doing more background things and so to come back to grad school has been, you know, opportunity to kind of reflect on the work that I have done this work on what's going on I think there's some to dr galaxy's point something important about dialogue al-sager something important about reflection and having the time to think and process what's going on and and movement spaces,

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Sometimes a mountain is always a crisis which is the nature of, you know, this world right now and the systems. And I think we also have to make to room to process and think so i think i'm just now really being able to appreciate some of the work that I've done over the years, and consider, you know, the lessons learned and the mistakes and grow from that so when

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I'm. When I hit it again, because I think the other thing about this, to me it's a lifelong thing and I know sometimes you can't just always be out in the front line so I have to step back and come back and so when I come back to organize them all. We'll have some time to reflect, it will be released and grammar here. No, let me not, but.

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So I think what I like, you know, in processing my work is exactly what I mentioned before is, you know, bringing shows to another world is possible but community. I'm getting a little older, I'm not the youngest person in groups anymore so as I Oh like I've had an opportunity to mentor other people, and see them take things and do things that I could never even think of, you know, and hopefully slam dunk this in a way that I can you know what I mean, that I may not be able to see.

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So that's something I appreciate and then the community built is so critical. I think you want to love. When things go well because you know, things can get shaky, but also I think the last one is that I think I'll leave it there, actually. So, yeah.

Daniel Enrique Perez

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Thank you all, and Prisca started commenting on actually a question that I wanted to pose. And I think we think we've answered everything else in the chat already but can you talk just briefly about the future of your work and also social justice activism and just thinking about how many of you touch about how you came into work. Also, some of the histories that impacted you and also even tactics that were used in the past but how do you see these things changing the future, especially considering know social media, how we're actually having this forum today right because of the of the covert pandemic and just other issues but how do you see social justice activism and some of the movements that you're involved with transforming in the future and what does the future look like for them?

Dr. Satsuki Ina

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It's an interesting question because you know when you're actively organizing and responding. It's moment to moment, I mean, Every time I open up my computer there's something that has to be done. And in the immediate future. I look forward to, you know, I think the power of direct action has really been remarkable and just having gathered in my own community. The nice American community

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been locked down. And so, you know, my hope in the immediate future is that we will we will be back on the streets again, we will be showing up in DC, we will be hanging folder Japanese paper cranes by the thousands on defense there to demand that these detention facilities, be closed down in the long term future. I feel like the, the whole idea of social justice activism is catching on in a way that you know we're not just.

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We're just not a few troublemakers that are becoming more and more familiar ways that we push for change. We know in our organization and with our allies have found that grassroots activism has a profound effect. We have made changes, we have gotten responses. We have protected children, because we were, we showed up, and we got the press, and we got, social media, so I think we have more tools now to cross, you know, boundaries and get national movements going in ways that we couldn't in the past so I feel

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This is the path, this is a way that future change can move so much faster to push legislation and policy to change the basic way in which we function in this country.

Escenthio Marigny

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I'm kind of hardened by, you know, during last year we saw that increase in mutual aid and support within communities right, which I think I said once a beautiful thing but it's also showing how much the state is not, you know, the state does not protect the way it should. So you know that whole social contract and we might have to go back and examine that for some people. But I think what to, to the point I would make previously like yeah I think the future is going to be an experimentation building community building in our communities.

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Respond by being able to respond and put pressure from outside. You know, I think it will be critical because I think, unfortunately what we've seen and I'm not, you know, go back and forth where Lucy the ground but I think it may not be crucial. one of the crucial fights. You know the state is not listening. And I think that's because the power from below is we need to build power.

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And we build these movements right there obviously things happening but I think what I'm hoping for is more of a coherence from these different movements and and different organizations that are, that, you know, showing up during COVID but even prior to that right. And that's what I'm excited about. I think this is a turning point or last year the turning point we just don't may not necessarily see it quite yet you need to take some time. But I do think there's gonna be a lot of experimentation I think a lot of.

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Unfortunately hard and terrible lessons have been learned and we're going to see some, some new things I think come to the forefront in terms of how we think of movements and how we think of struggle that go beyond what we have considered legitimate, the needs that we do things like.

Dr. Satsuki Ina

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I want to just add one thing before we have preschool speak up because the future is going to be based on solidarity that that we're finally breaking down barriers across communities are mostly Japanese American, Asian American brothers and sisters are organizing to support hr 40, because our community received redress and reparations, you know, many years ago and so we're forming ally-ship with different organizations and our last protest in Oklahoma we had Black Lives matter, United We dream, we had.

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Ben the arc, American Indian Movement brown bread, and it was incredible. And to me, that was the future that that white supremacy has fractured us and kept us from working together. And as we move through our own internalized racism that we see each other as the way in which we can build our strength like Escenthio was saying that we were going to get stronger is when we all work together.

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So even having like this panel discussion with all of us, sharing our perspective, is an example of what lies ahead and what will make the difference in this country.

Dr. Prisca Gayles

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Thank you so much for that actually. You said the future solidarity and I was gonna say I'm not gonna tell you what I was gonna say I'll say, the two things I was gonna say and then I'll say the second thing, which really very much so relates to what you were just said, so I. One of the things I was gonna say the future is struggle and so, like I said, a lot of the issues that we deal with are so systemic and are so ingrained to the way that our modern society currently exists that we are going to be working for quite some time to dismantle that.

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The other thing that I was going to say is that the future is transnational solidarity. And so I think that, you know, while like global structures and globalization in general has really resulted in damage to lives on such a large scale, what we might think of as the altar counter globalization movement has also resulted in these increased connections and the sharing of information. And so, life is to be said we have folks coming together from all walks of life but not only domestically internationally right the information that's being shared, we're learning strategies that we never even

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thought of that have been useful and effective and other places and I think that is really important and I think for anybody who is concerned with activism I think it's really important to recognize that each and every one of our success for social justice depends on this process of everyone else. And so, I think the future is intersection funnel and transnational and so, and I hope it is.

Meredith Oda

01:05:46

Well thank you so much I think that's a fantastic note to end on. So go out and take to the streets partner with people and I think it's interesting to know that all of you to work your work has taken you across borders, and I think that that exactly speaks to your point Prisca, all of you sort of have realized that you have to sort of understand these trans border movements if you're going to dismantle social justice has to happen in your community, but it also has to happen across borders and I think that's something apparent and all of your work.

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Well thank you so much to all of our panelists. This was a fantastic conversation, we have Dr. Enrique Perez. And Dr Prisca Gayles, and Dr. Dr. Satsuki Ina and who knows maybe eventually Dr. Escenthio Marigny.

01:06:35

And I'm Meredith Oda, Thank you all for joining us. This is the Core Humanity Thought on Tap series. Please join us next month for our panel on building legacies of economic empowerment. And there will be a survey once you close this window so I would encourage you to take it so we can hear your feedback.

Dr. Satsuki Ina

01:06:55

Thank you to everybody, thank you Escenthio.

Dr. Prisca Gayles

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Thank you so much everyone.