

Thought on Tap #2 (Resistance Movements)

10/11/18

Transcript:

Introduction:

0:00:00.030 *Bretton Rodriguez*: you're listening to "Thought on Tap" a monthly podcast about the role of the humanities in the world today.

0:00:05.029 *Carlos Mariscal*: Brought to you by the College of Liberal Arts and the Core Humanities department at the University of Nevada, Reno.

0:00:10.260 *Bretton Rodriguez*: This is Bretton Rodriguez, a lecturer in Core Humanities and a co-organizer of "Thought on Tap".

0:00:17.209 *Carlos Mariscal*: And this is Carlos Mariscal, an assistant professor of philosophy and also a coordinator of "Thought on Tap" and every month we convene a panel of local experts to discuss the issues of the day and have a moderated discussion at the university Laughing Planet. This month we're talking with the role of the humanities in resistance movements and now here's Carlos Mariscal.

Resistance Movements:

0:00:33.160 *Carlos Mariscal*: So I'm just gonna say thank you to Bretton who just introduced us and so that the people that are listening to the podcast version at home please make yourselves heard and applaud. (Applause) We are live from "Thought on Tap" we are live from laughing planet actually it's not live I'm gonna re-record that a couple of times it's gonna be okay. My name is Carlos Mariscal I am a professor in the department of Philosophy I also teach in the Core Humanities department at the University of Nevada, Reno just across the street here and I want to welcome you all to our second thought on tap it's your monthly guide to news views and brews here in Reno, it is hosted by the University of Nevada, Reno College of Liberal Arts and the Core Humanities department and I want to especially thank the laughing planet and Tim here for being such generous hosts, for providing the space, buying rounds and providing the chips you guys are so loudly eating right now. It's gonna be okay, next time I'll just like have him provide wet tortillas or something so the last very last month we spoke here about the role of humanities and the times of crisis and that was moderated by Daniel Enrique Perez and we had panelists Caitlyn Early, Bretton Rodriguez and myself, today we're gonna discuss the role of humanities might have in resistance movements and after our panel discussion we're gonna have time for some questions and just a general conversation between us.

But first I want to say a few things we're recording this November 8th 2018 as we speak there are people gathered in various parts of the country including here in Reno to protest that our president yesterday fired the chief law requested the resignation of the chief law enforcement officer in the country the day before that there was a an election you might have heard of it. It was a day in which this so-called blue wave of 52 million people voted for Democratic candidates and it met with a red resistance I guess of 47 million people. While the Democrats gained control of one house of Congress probably somewhere in the range of 230 seats although we're still that's still being counted and adjudicated they gained control of seven governor's mansions they did lose three or four Senate seats and gained one in return here in Nevada as we speak their accounts recounts runoffs and lawsuits pending across the nation and something happened on Tuesday that may have gone under the radar starting in January of 2019 in every state in the Union except for Minnesota, that is 49 states, the legislature in each of those states is going to be controlled by a single party there are also now these so-called trifectas where governor's mansion and the legislature is controlled by the same party 14 for the Democratic Party and 22 for the Republican party that is changed from Monday when there was eight and 26, respectively, Nevada is one of these trifectas it is a Democratic trifecta. All five of the states that border us are also trifectas four of the five states that border those states are also a trifectas and I could go on. It is the majority of the states at this point and it's not just the states that are united in their division. In New York's 11th district Dan Donovan who was the last Republican representing an urban area and he lost his seat on Tuesday. This country is now literally divided geographically in terms of its representation almost as thoroughly as it could be. There were exit polls on Tuesday that showed that the division went beyond geography, Democrats were favored nearly two-to-one by people with postgraduate degrees, Republicans had roughly the same advantage among white people with no college degrees, among the non-white community Democrats won Latino men by 29 percentage points and that was the best showing for Republicans among non-white demographic groups. Black women had an eighty five percent gap. The gender gap between voting for Republicans and Democrats is the largest ever mentioned measured now at twenty one percentage points. The LGBT community went four to one in favor of the Democrats and age was another factor and there seems to be a direct relationship between age and voting Republican or voting at all. The median age in this country is thirty five and a half years old but the median age of voters is 15 years older than that. So some of you probably feel fairly happy with the government that's representing you either your local government or your national government living here that's tricky because they are very different governments but maybe you don't care that much maybe you're just happy with whoever represents you and you think that they're doing a swell job and I really I'm happy for you that's great but somebody you know is not happy somebody you know, that you care about that you love feels like they are part of a small group that is being represented by people that don't represent their interests and that's true no matter where on the ideological spectrum you are or they are. Somebody you care about feels like they are marginalized right now. So tonight if it's not about you it's about them the people that you care about that feel like the government that is supposed to represent them doesn't. Tonight is about people who feel like the levers of power are too slow, corrupt, bought or otherwise just against them. Tonight is about the individual that has a voice, a mind and just a little bit of motivation. So we're gonna learn from the present and the past, we're gonna talk about the marginalized and

the oppressor and we're gonna go into the theoretical and the applied/the practical. So with that said, that preamble, I'd like to introduce our panelists and I'll go in order in the order that they're seated which coincidentally is the order that I prepared so who okay. Up first she is an associate professor in the Department of world languages and literature in the University of Nevada, Reno, she received her PhD from the University of Colorado Boulder and has published multiple books on French and francophone literature and film showcasing the vast literary and geographic diversity of the genre, especially highlighting the underappreciated work of colonies and of colonies and in the African Diaspora. Her research focuses on conflict post colonialism, illness narratives, and risk-taking in literature and film. Please welcome Dr. Isabelle Favre. (Applause). Next he is an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science also at UNR, he received his PhD from the University of Virginia and has held positions in DePaul University and Texas Christian University, his work focuses on the ethics of social and revolutionary movements, democratic theory, American political thought and environmental politics. He has published in contemporary pragmatism, structural oppression, group-based injustice and the ethics of dissent. His work has been funded by the Clay Endowment for the Humanities the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation and several others. Please welcome, Dr. Callum Ingram. Callum Ingram: Hello everybody, thank you. And finally, she is a cultural strategist, a public speaker, an educator and an author, she has degrees in sociology and curriculum and instruction from the University of California Santa Barbara for more than a decade she taught middle and high school social studies where she was recognized as one of the most inspirational teachers, there she served as union leader in chapter chair for the United Teachers of Los Angeles where she received the unsung hero award, she has been the United Workers Congress communications strategist and the communications director for the Center for story based strategy where she is currently the innovation director. Please welcome

0:10:38:300 *Felicia Perez*: Hello, I'm supposed to say something in here for the podcast...I'll say that a rock is just a rock that's not a weapon.

0:10:49.400 *Carlos*: fair enough that's good and topical. So I actually wanted to start off with Felicia, I think you've spent the most time organizing and taking part in the events that that led to Tuesday and I expect that you're at least somewhat happy with the results I just want to ask how do you feel in what's next.

0:11:12.300 *Felicia*: As many of you who watch the results no we didn't find out what was happening in Nevada until somewhere around 11:42 p.m. so up until that point I have to say that I was not surprised, I was not shocked, and I was completely understanding and was not at all worried necessarily about the results of the elections across the country and I think that that's actually a lot of what has transformed since the election of 2016 whereby we have a lot of folks who are more interested in what the election results are in their backyard than in the entire neighborhood and I feel like at the end of the day there is this desire to be as close to the solution as possible and that folks feel even more distant from federal issues and elections and even more passionate about things that are very locally because we feel like that's actually where direct democracy lives, there is no electoral college for our representatives on the state level on the city level what we vote is actually what happens there

is no you know additional process by which the popular vote will not actually be recognized, so come 11:45 very tired very you know anxious that where are those what's wrong is it something wrong with polling are people having a hard time voting is this voter suppression all the different things that can go through someone's mind and then seeing the results I wouldn't say that I was happy as much as I felt a great sense of relief. I could tell you a statistic that 45.5 people living in the United States have a chronic disease but that's not gonna move you so much as if I tell you that just last month I finished my 32nd chemo infusion that cost twenty thousand dollars every time I take it and if the Affordable Care Act was going to be on the chopping block based on the difference of who was controlling the Congress and the Senate that I might die. So for me this election was very much so about will I get to live to see my birthday in April? Or will I not? So I can give you all the facts and figures but stories are what actually moved people this particular election and the more we actually share and follow in the historical footsteps of what the LGBTQTI community shared with us which is coming out of the closet, the more that we can come out of all the political issue closets and talk about what's happening to us the more we're actually gonna see one another and not see each other as blue and red but see each other as the people that we are.

0:13:54.320 *Carlos*: Okay that's awesome I think yeah you should applaud yes definitely (Applause) Callum I wanted to follow up actually and that it so speaking in terms of stories I I do think stories matter and the narratives that we tell matter in the communities that lead this matter, so Callum I know you've done some work on the limits of civility in the face of group based injustice and while preparing for this I was thinking about some of the bigger names in this arena like Mahatma Gandhi Martin Luther King Jr. and it seemed like when we think about the big movements that they were able to make coming from marginalized positions and making the strongest governments in the world listen to them, they were able to get a lot done but it also seems to me like that requires the cooperation of the media and the government, so it seems like it's a balance of information distribution, marginalized community and the people in charge. Do you think that's always the case?

0:15:06.480 *Callum*: Yeah, I think that that's a really great question and there's a lot that I could sort of say in response to it, and I think one of the things I do want to say is like King and Gandhi, like these sort of like pseudo Saint like figures of political change who were able to non-violently instigate kind of more just political systems. At the time when they were actually alive and operating they were vilified. King himself was looked at as being uncivil, disruptive, not himself violent but just sort of the tip of the spear that then comes into communities and disrupts the stability there. So I think there's something like you know it's interesting, we have these figures we look to, this is how you make social change if you're trying to push from the margins you look to King and you look to Gandhi but they themselves had to be sort of like recuperated. And like that project of recuperation I mean if this is sort of a humanities ish thing like that's the thing I think you humanists have done a whole lot of really cool work on it's like understand like without Malcolm you don't have Martin, without you know no one's gonna you know and this sort of process by which were able to recuperate Martin Luther King the process by which Lyndon Johnson could invite him into the Oval Office came because there was a threat out there from the scarier face of social change. Malcolm X would have understood himself in

those terms as I understand like he and some he also had to play the game as the sort of person that would bring people the table with Martin.

0:16:37.266 *Carlos*: So you're saying that the Martin Luther King Jr. of today we might be vilifying right now.

0:16:46.800 *Callum*: yeah I mean I guess that's what I want to sort of say is that like you know the media the government marginalized populations yeah absolutely that's a route to social change but it's not a straight route there necessarily. It's gonna be a kind of you know the groups that we vilify now are maybe the ones that are going to in 30 years be our Saints, you know black lives matter is not a popular group to bring up in a lot of classrooms on UNR'S campus now. ANTIFA is not a popular group to bring up on you know in classrooms on campus now. I think a lot of us people are gonna be ashamed of how they talked about those in 30 years and I guess that's something I do want to kind of maybe push there's a lot more I want to say on this.

0:17:30.251 *Carlos*: I wanted to ask Dr. Favre so sometimes I think that the world has never been more divided but then I think back to times in our history where people were literally tortured and enslaved entire populations just based on how they looked how they spoke, the religions that they worship you've spent more time studying that history than I do and I want to know if you have any inspiration or any insight that you might have from that area to guide us.

0:18:02.725 *Isabelle*: Yes, so first of all I'd like to say that what we're doing now in the form of Salon, actually dates back to the 17th century and it started by women, because at the time as you know they didn't have much to say, but they already had you know a few neurons, they were educated and what they did was that they invited all those knowledgeable men around them and give them the opportunity to just share their creativity, their stories because that was more about that but it gives them also the opportunity to participate to that and to shine. And so I think that's good to think about that this is a form that I particularly enjoy. I think conversation it's something that you know brings us together and we can share ideas, and it's good that they are on tap tonight, but that word of resistance in French directly goes back to what is La'Resistance and that was of World War Two, when the German, the Third Reich came in shall de Gaulle just he through what we call lapel the call he called every French people to kind of resist Mariscal, that was actually a collaborator and in doing that in going into the resistance it was it was from Syria yeah it was it was actually a lot of risk you needed courage and to resist you do need courage when the true resistant needed courage and a lot of people did not answer right away of course at the end of a war every French person was a resistant, but when it happened not really. Now where does literature film and all that come into the into play. You know from all that all times there has been writers and artists who were like deeply involved in resisting what's happening, but with their own weapons which is either pen or music or stories and at the time you heard about Albert Camus for instance, he was just he was in hiding in a cellar and they put up a journal the resistance called combat for the whole time he was taking tremendous risk and he was writing with all the power he could get, not in a fictional sense but in resisting style and he was it was really powerful and then you also heard probably

about Jean Paul Sartre, philosopher and writer as well and Sartre was made prisoner and he was sent to Germany for a little less than a year and when he was in jail that's where he came up with this idea--he was an existentialist which made him say that kind of a phrase that is kind of a lot of French people know, where he said that he or they have never been as freed as during the German occupation. Why did he say that in jail, because for him freedom is a choice, it's not something that is given and I think that can make us think he was a philosopher of everyday life you know in our life there are moments where when we speak up it means something, it is a choice and it is when it's a resisting comment or a resisting viewpoint or resisting action there are some risks taken it could be in your family it could be on the job place it could be everywhere, even if we talk more you know in a political sense it is part of us and this is why we have not forgotten that. Now there was another resistant that you probably know and his name is Frantz Fanon, you know he was from Martinique, he was a young man and at the time Martinique was colonized by the French but when they knew what was happening with the Third Reich he was like 18 19 and he said wherever there the dignity of men and women are compromised I want to engage, I want to be engaged in Sartre term, so he didn't say anything to anybody he left at night he went to San Domingo they organized themselves and then he was part, he went to the northern part of France where he was extremely dangerous when he was there he was disappointed very quickly. Why? Because there was racism all around him and he wrote a very poignant letter to his mom where he said, you know mom I'm sorry I left and I think, he said, I think I had it all wrong. I was wrong it was not the right decision to be here because those French farmers near me they don't give a damn about that. So after that he just he just he came back and then he went to Paris and that's where he realized that he was a black man because before he did not really notice or experience except at work or all you know what happened and you know all this so you know it feels it is historical of course it feels far it's not that long ago actually but recently there is a movie called antigen, or the days of glory, and what happens it's a group of francophone artists and also the director who were tired of the silence in which all these African men who fought and died for France at the time were not recognized at all even worse than us than that when the French people came back from the war they had a pension, they were treated as veterans, but the African were not, why? Because by the time they were freed so since they were freed just take care of yourself, right so that movie came out in 2007 and at the time the president was shocked and after that a lot of French people said we had no idea about this story because it really shows how many African men fought and the president's wife Huck's wife kind of was taken by that and she said we have to change that, we have to honor those veteran by the time there were not a whole lot of veterans right so the president said ok we're gonna we're gonna honor them and they have a decent pension, well then what happened? His term got finished terminated and then the next president Sarkozy he just did not honor it. So all these all these men never got justice. But this is to tell you also that in case you see that movie or you have the DVD, it's at the library, look at the extra with it because you will see that the actors was well known one is a comic even, you really feel that they did that for their grand uncle's their grandfather's, for the memory of it. I think it's important to just realize that film and film makers and artists are really part of resistance as well.

0:26:43.240 *Carlos*: This is great, I think about the stories that we tell and the heroes that we have and I don't know I guess who this question might be for maybe for Felicia there's the stories that we tell and the stories that we don't tell the heroes that we have and the heroes that we forget about. I started the discussion with a bunch of statistics and you followed suit but then you immediately came back with a story that I think hit everybody and I know you work for the Center for story based strategy and I was wondering if you could just say a little bit more about what you think the role of stories is and in resistance movements in and in anything going.

0:27:31.539 *Felicia*: So I work for the Center for story based strategy we're 15 years old we started in the early thousands and essentially we're an on-the-ground organization nationally and internationally and we train organizations that are very small and closest to where the heart and the harm and the hurt is for very progressive social justice causes, we are definitely biased I am NOT going to tell you that we talk about all sides of the story or that we are an unbiased organization, if you know anything about the television show *Mad Men* consider us *Mad Men* for the people. We teach people how to make their own narrative campaigns that are going to Center the real sort of you know most marginalized communities in their work, so for example last week I just came back from Nogales Mexico where we can talk about 7,000, or a growing caravan, "mob" of people coming but what I can tell you is that the three different days that I crossed the border by foot at the port of entry I saw groups of 20 families all with children, women who were pregnant, moms and dads and they are sitting standing sleeping on very thin mats some with no shoes some with shoes with blisters all along the bottom of their feet bleeding open sores, and they're crying and they're weeping and we were working with an organization called the bean Kino border initiative and what we learned there what we kept asking is do they know and you can imagine what I'm asking do they know about do they know that they might be separated from their children, parents would be separated from their parents and do they know that that might be permanent, do they know and the answer was yes. We tell them and Kino border initiative just so you know is a run by Jesuit nuns it is an organization that basically provides a bunch of different shelters where they feed clothe give legal advice and medical care to migrant communities and families for decades now this isn't a new thing and when we ask them do they know they said yes but they don't believe us, they don't believe that the United States would separate families they do not believe that the United States would do this and they think we're lying to them. Imagine that, imagine the fact that migrant people's coming from Central America who are running because in their neighborhood next door the women the children the young girls are either going to be kidnapped to be raped or the young boys are going to be forced to work for the cartels or work for the military and be child soldiers. Imagine that they don't believe when people are trying to tell them really consider what's happening you might not see your children again and the fact that they think we're lying because the stories they've heard the stories they've seen in television shows in the news in movies in books they've read in their own families telling them things is that the United States is a place of hope, is a place where we want to help you that we can, that we have in the past, and that we're here and that they don't believe people. Imagine that and so what we do at the Center for story based strategy is we train people on how do people frame stories and in

every story, biggest trick in the book is how you cast the characters in your story. Are they cast as villains? Doesn't mean they are villains. No no no how are they cast are they cast as heroes doesn't mean they are they cast as such are they portrayed as such is it framed in that way and who are the victims, and oftentimes what we see is that particularly with this migrant caravan as it's called, but it's really just a bunch of people moving to save their lives, and the lives of the people that they love. They're not being seen as the victim, they're not being seen as the heroes, when that's what they're doing for their families, they're being cast as these villains in certain stories and some stories they're being cast in other ways so we have this thing this methodology this moment that we talk about the Center for story based strategy that truth and meaning are two separate things, that I can tell you all the truth in the world but if it doesn't mean anything to you then it doesn't work, which also means that I could tell you falsities, I could tell you lies and if it means something to you you're gonna believe it. So if I were to look up and I would say oh that's the Big Dipper does that actually mean that there's a dipper and a spoon in the sky, we give it meaning so that we can remember things. If I say how many continents are there and where are they a continents a body of land surrounded by water, well there's two that aren't completely surrounded by water. Truth versus meaning that would be Asia in Europe. And so the idea being that there's a difference between the two and the more we learn about them and more we learn about how people are cast is not necessary who they are, and that we can change those castings, the more that we're able to actually really be able to see the stories that we're hearing for what they are, and how we can change them for ourselves as we move forward and as we share things and I just want to say that you know I moved here to Reno Nevada in the summer of 2012 and at that time black lives matter was just really starting to become a force and a movement and at that time we here in Reno were always like two days or a week behind all the other national movements and protests so everybody would be up in arms on a Saturday we're on the streets Reno, Wednesday we're gonna be out there at 7:00 a.m. and when we were doing this organizing at around 2013-2014 I got to tell you when Tamir Rice was killed when Michael Brown was killed there were 30 of us at best out in the streets in Nevada downtown 30 at best so on the day before the women's March after the Trump election victory I was asked on a panel how many people do you think are gonna show up tomorrow and I said I'll be excited if it's at least a hundred you all know those of you who were here during that time how many people showed up for the first women's March in little tiny Reno Nevada, 20,000 people the next year the same number, so when we talk about the stories that we see here locally those are the stories that we hear and that we see that people are actually willing at this moment to put their bodies their time their money on the line for what they actually believe in value and it's not Democrat and Republican. We always frame it like that in the US because we are stuck in a two-party system but we're a baby country did you hear what we were just talking about in terms of like going back centuries going back and modeling and talking about countries that are thousands of years old and we are not. And so when we talk about where we've been in the stories of our country there are so many stories yet to be told about what happens here but when we start to share the stories about how far we've come and what we're doing and we see each other as individuals I guarantee you of those 20 thousand people in the women's March many of them more than half of them were also registered Republicans. This isn't about red or blue. This is about values of what we believe as people as people who live here in the United States, I'm never gonna say

as citizens because many of us are not, and that's not fair to take away those folks voices. And so I really do honestly believe that the stories that we tell that the stories that we watch that we are really critically looking at, how we ourselves are framing this issue about this binary it's this or that, it's not. My oldest sister, my oldest sister who I love eight years older than me lives in North Carolina she's been a registered Republican her entire life she voted for Trump, she stands by Trump, she's my sister. I am the direct opposite. For a year and a half I did not speak to her I could not speak to her, I could not fathom that, and then I had to go give a talk at a high school and I had to figure out how was I going to talk to these students and I labeled the name of that talk "there is no them there is only us" And I couldn't give that talk if I wasn't actually walking it myself. So I had to call my sister because a taxicab driver told me what you are here for you here to visit your sister in North Carolina. I was like no I'm here for work I wouldn't dare visit her. And he said why because she voted for Trump? And as far as I'm concerned that man and the GOP is out to kill me and he said you know what political parties and presidents they come and go but your siblings they don't. I called my sister, I talked to my sister regularly now, and the conversations that I have with my sister are not me telling her, is me listening to her and her listening to me that's what this salon has thoughts on taps all of this is about is hearing one another and listening to one another and when I asked her are you happy? Are you happy? She says no, I said well do something about it, hold your party accountable hold your elected officials accountable and that's the problem. Right now not too many of us are willing to hold people accountable and remember that people work for us, they represent us, and if we us are not happy then we can change who our representatives are. And if we're not willing to do that if we're not willing to believe that maybe our values are more important than our party line then we're gonna have even more problems in this country than we have. I don't actually think that we're a polarized divided country I think that we are an isolated from one another country, that we don't speak to one another anymore, that we feel like a text message is better than a conversation on the phone that we feel that a gif is better than actually sharing how we feel. And that has what has pulled us away from each other, we're not polarized into two places we're polarized in two millions of places and we all feel alone, and we all feel like no one is actually caring for us until we have those conversations where somebody says I care about you, I'll pick you up to take you to that appointment, I'll come and help you move I'll come and bring you something. Ask that person who helps you what their political party is, you're gonna be shocked.

0:37:39.080 *Carlos*: So okay this, that's fascinating you mentioned this because I also have an older sibling who also voted for Trump, and I have discussions with him with some regularity about politics and one thing that I'm always surprised by and maybe this question is for Isabelle actually, I'm always surprised by how quickly we move from discussions that seem like they're political into discussions that seem like they're cultural. And I've noticed this again and again we do the shift without realizing it. We switch right away from things that we can pass laws to change, to saying that we actually don't like people kneeling or statues or something. I'm thinking about those issues and maybe you know you can add in single issue voting you can add in a couple of other issues to this, how do you think a community that would otherwise be unified would resist such divisions that come in and serve to separate it?

0:39:05.340 *Isabelle*: Actually what I could say in relation to what I've been working on, I've been working on what was what happened in Rhonda. In Rhonda there has been a genocide and we basically ignored it in Europe and in the States even more. While we still, and it's a good thing, we still talk a lot about World War 2 and World War 1 into the second genocide and what happened there that was very divisive, we need to go to the roots of things. How people get divided and people often get divided by power, talking about resistance and what happened in Rhonda was that they were colonized and what we Europeans did there was – when the anthropologists got there they looked at people and they decided who were the people who physically looked a little bit like the European, and they thought that these people should be superior, and the other people who they thought looked like African they would be inferior, now the truth is they were obviously all African, and before that they lived they live together they just had different roles but when you start organizing a country and ruling a country like we do and establishing hierarchy, establishing all sorts of systems where some become superior to others, then of course it's divisive. And divisiveness is often everywhere the fact that were hurt when Felicia tells her story of people who are barefooted is that we know that it's not fair. It's not ok to divide people between rich and poor because that's what it is, it's not it's not red and blue as you said. A lot of it is economic situation and it's the planet being crazy and we have destroyed a lot of countries and these countries then have destroyed themselves. And I think that comes from divisiveness and often this divisiveness come from authority, and again resistance is important but when can we resist and who can resist could you resist when you're barefooted? Could you resist when you have no education? When you are poor? When you have no choice? Basically you can resist when you do have choice, and now we have more choices we here we have more choices including choices that would be to just express ourselves, whatever the means. Whatever the means we take, and I think that it is true that politics is actually human, it is human in the good and bad sense what's bad is we let it often be taken over by people who want power, and to resist power it's again it's resistance it's what we're talking about tonight.

0:42:40.930 *Carlos*: So this is great and I realize that we're going on a little long and I wanted to get the audience ready in case we have questions. But first I want to turn to Callum here and there's a number of things I want to follow up on. A couple of these threads that we've been seeing throughout the night, one in particular is this idea of communities and fighting against systems. Maybe entire situations that are abstract or distanced, maybe long term. Communities that don't have a particular bad guy to blame but are just struggling. And how they maintained their unity, how they are able to fight that, and how they're able to enact change. I don't know if you have anything to say about that or something else.

0:43:41.760 *Callum*: So yeah if you have an answer that is my book project and that's the chapter I've been avoiding writing so if any of you all have an answer for how to stop oppression I'll buy you a beer downstairs. But, in all seriousness I think you know there is there's something really difficult about fighting a lot of the sort of problems we have now, which are these broad decentered problems. I mean when somebody talks about a structural form of oppression; a structural form of injustice, there is a kind of wispyness to it. It's not like there's an evil king that shows up at your house and takes-well actually there is now an evil king

that shows up your house and like takes your stuff-but you know when we talk about structural forms of oppression usually we're talking about something that's a little bit more written into the norms of society, written into institutional codes that might seem gender or race or class neutral but has these rolling effects that we would recognize as being unjust, and fighting something like that is hard. Structures are big and they're messy, and they're fluffy, and they're fluffy-yeah I mean like there's the sort of gilded cage or something. This is something I'm trying to figure out in my own work is, these things are so big but the experience of injustice is so particular, and like how can we attend to the fact that there's actual like individual people with stories to tell, who we will never meet, who are implicated in the same structures that we are. Or maybe we're implicated in perpetuating those structures that we will never be able to speak to. How can we build some sort of a coherent movement against that? I am still feeling that out in some ways. But I do think kind of like shouting back to what I've said before. I don't think it's always going to mean playing by the institutional rules. I don't think it's always going to be Martin Luther King sometimes it's gonna be Malcolm. Sometimes it's gonna be you know the wretched of the earth. Somebody whose work I've found really inspiring is Frank Wilkerson, he's kind of a film critic he's broadly sort of the center of the afro-pessimist movement. His basic understanding is that our world is constructed basically on like an anti-black politics. American politics is not so much pro white is anti-black, that is the cornerstone of our politics and that's something that's unavoidable. It's written into the American DNA. He calls it afro-pessimism it doesn't seem like a very inspiring basis for a political movement because for him that is the ontology of America. America is constitutively anti-black. But, once you acknowledge that. I think once a lot of people have started chewing on the afro pessimist movement you start thinking in much more broad terms about what political change can look like, that it is not just a political revolution it's a cultural revolution. It's an economic revolution, it's going and speaking to somebody, telling your story to somebody that you would never tell it to. That social change has to be very broad, it has to be very deep and not only is that acceptable but that's something we should celebrate. And that's also terrifying by the way. If we're gonna change this stuff, if we're gonna change the structures that are oppressive, that's gonna make almost everyone uncomfortable, even the oppressed. There's a certain comfort to that. There's a certain comfort in the known. So how do we orient ourselves to be accepting and excited about this terrifying leap into the unknown? Destroying the core structures that order our lives, destroying our own identities. I think that's the core of what actually meaningful resistance looks like. You have to be against everything. Which is a terrifying place to end up in the book and it's not really actually probably many people. You got to be willing to throw it all away and like unless you're willing to do that and excited to do that and excited for somebody to throw your stuff away. Unless you can be excited about that I think your counter-revolutionary. I think you're still going to be implicated in those structures, you have to be willing to throw it all out. That's a lot to ask I realize, but I think I think that's where I wound up and I don't know if that's right or wrong.

0:47:57.579 *Carlos*: Yeah that seems right to me. So I want to throw it to the audience now if you guys have questions, we'll reach out to you. I'm reminded because I'm reading the Ron Chernow biography of Alexander Hamilton and I'm surprised by how many of the proposals in the Continental Congress were about like hereditary rule or establishing this ruler that would

would have every advantage so they wouldn't want to be selfish and they wouldn't want to steal anything. We found it so hard even after fighting a revolution to leave the structures that we knew.

0:48:46.776 *Callum*: Alexander Hamilton was not always on the right side of history. That's like what it actually mean to be okay with not knowing what comes the day after the revolution yeah and then not trying to call crawl right back to where you came from. That is I think one of the big critiques of the occupy movement back when it was going on: They don't know what they're asking for, it's the 1% versus the 99%, they don't have an agenda, this is all something you hear as a critique of black lives matter, which is untrue as well, but that there is no coherent policy platform of what they want to build to make a totally post-racial society. Or, the occupy movement doesn't have a perfect plan for how to take from the 1% give it to the 99%, we're not gonna hold Bezos upside down and shake him till the money always falls out of his pockets, or, hopefully we will, but that'll just be part of it. But how can we be okay with that, how can we be okay with the uncertainty of anti-oppression politics? We don't know how to build a utopia yet, but if we don't try we're just gonna keep doing that Hamilton thing, and keep trying to crawl back in the cave.

0:49:55.340 *Felicia*: I just think that we also have a problem in the states with acknowledgement. We don't want to acknowledge things, we don't want to take ownership of things, we don't want to say we're sorry, we don't want to say yes that happened. I mean just today in Canada there was acknowledgment that when political refugees, political asylum seekers from Europe who were Jewish were coming in a very large boat both to the United States and to Canada that they were denied by the thousands port of entry. They were denied entry into the United States and denied entry into Canada and they were sent back and all of those individuals died, in the Holocaust and Canada today acknowledged and said we're sorry. When was the last time the United States said they were sorry, for anything. I believe it was Ronald Reagan and I believe it was around the Japanese internment, also known as Japanese concentration camps of World War II. We don't like to say we're sorry, we just had this last year, a monument that was unveiled that talks about lynching across the United States, it has families enslaved, a statue surrounding that area, is there anything in that exhibit, think about your visits to the Holocaust Museum, think about your exhibits to different cultural museums in the United States, do they ever really show who is responsible for all of that injustice, no. Those villains are completely absent from the story that we tell one another. Why? Why are we afraid of acknowledging and saying, my bad, I'm sorry, what can I do to make it right? We don't do that, and when I was in Berlin a few years ago you'll see that acknowledgement everywhere, on the ground, on the sidewalks, markers saying this family lived here they were Jewish, this is the camp they were sent to, and this is when they died. When countries acknowledge what they do they get to heal. We can't heal here because we aren't willing to acknowledge what we've done. And how we can make it right. And it's hard. How many of you have ever made a mistake and somebody calls you out on it and you turn red and you just want to crawl under a rock, you want to disappear, you don't want to own it, but then when you do and you get to a resolution, you're closer aren't you, you're better aren't you, you can resolve problems in the future better, can't you? But we don't do that nationally

and the real lesson is that we have to do this individually in small communities, in our homes, in our cities, in our towns, and our states because that is actually the lesson of the quote GOP. When Obama was president for eight years they took it city by city, town by town, state by state, so there are lessons here on all the different varieties of ways that people have come together, whether that's for our opinion good reasons or bad reasons but we know that acknowledgement is important, seeing each other is important, and being able to move on and heal is important.

0:53:07.060 *Carlos*: Amen to that. (Applause) I have a number of questions to ask but it does look like we are running past our allotted time, so maybe if there's any quick questions from the audience we can take those? Or if not we can maybe get a final word or two from from our panelists.

0:53:40.817 *Callum*: Can I use my last spot to ask a question of Felicia?

0:53:49.080 *Carlos*: Yes.

0:53:49.920 *Callum*: So one of the reasons that I am a socialist, I'm gonna own that publicly, is that socialism at least as I imagine it means you take care of people you don't like. That's a cornerstone, that's one of the great things I think about socialism. Is you don't have to like your neighbor, you can hate your neighbor, but you can still acknowledge that they should have health care. I guess I wonder and part of me is like really inspired by that as a model of social justice. Like personal indifference and just having a social structure that's basically premised on humanity, and I guess that is very unstory politics in some ways and I guess I don't know for one if there's a way to get to that, or if that's even a desirable goal.

0:54:33.150 *Felicia*: The goal of loving your neighbor even though you don't like them?

0:54:38.110 *Callum*: Or, hating your neighbor but wanting them to have health care.

0:54:42.210 *Felicia*: I encourage everyone, this is a personal plug, there is a National Geographic show called "One Strange Rock" the narrator is Will Smith, go see the final episode in the first season. "One Strange Rock" is all about Earth, it's all about the planet. It talks about astronauts and how the earth came to be and the astronauts that go up and down and what they see, and they have these astronauts speaking in this final episode talking about their massive perspective shift when they're up in the in the cosmos, in the galaxies, and they're looking down at the planet and they see no borders, they see no color differences, they see no gender differences, all they literally see are earthlings, and what unique changes in their lives they're able to make when they come back. That happens to us when we leave our town, when we leave our cities, when we leave our states, when we leave the country, everyone in here should have a passport and you should use it. You should get out of here so that you can come back here and basically make the changes that you want to see and appreciate things that are here as well. But being able to leave and see other people and talk to them and be in interaction with other people is super important, I personally right now hate my neighbor, I'm really mad at

him. He keeps on letting his dogs out and their dogs keep pushing through my fence and my dogs on my side keep wanting to defend their territory and the only solution I could come up with is we shouldn't have any walls, should we? Because the dogs just want to hang out with each other, they just think that this is my side and that's your side instead of this is all of our side. But, I'm really upset with him and that was my solution: maybe we should just get rid of our fences. And his answer was, no way...I mean well maybe. Just to begin the conversation of like really getting at the root of why, I grew up in his house where my mom told me I wasn't allowed to hate anybody. She said you can't hate anybody that's wrong. Imagine that, imagine growing up in a house where you weren't allowed to hate anybody, I could have strong feelings where I didn't like somebody, but I wasn't allowed to hate them. And when I asked my mom about why I wasn't allowed to hate somebody, she was like, because people hate us and the only way that we're going to be able to combat that is if we don't hate them. We have to take that out of our life and out of our vocabulary. So yeah I have to love my sister just like you have to love your brother but I also have to learn to like her and she has to learn to like me, and that takes time. So all these acts of resistance, there are stories out there that say that Trump and folks who support Trump that they're actually the resistance. That they're resisting against a new norm and a new wave of new ways that we want to live our lives here in the United States. So imagine that, what if we're not actually the resistance we're actually the majority, and that people are resisting us because they're not into this massive change. I'm 42, I get it. There are people who are in their 20s that I work with, my boss is 12 years younger than me and I have to remember that if now we say Latinx instead of Latino, if we say Chicanx instead of Chicano, then that's what we do because the young lead us, older people don't lead us, and if you look at those exit polls, that's the truth, the people who actually won in challenged places, they were young, they were fresh, they didn't talk about what we're against, they talked about what were for and so I follow the rest of you, I don't make the norms, I just follow them.

0:58:17.640 *Isabelle*: I think each of us needs to also be aware of how powers circulates because power is all over, it's all over our societies and it's in our own lives, we've been talking about politics, we've been talking about Trump, we've been talking about what happened in Africa. But, as Felicia said we need to tend our garden also. Power really is something that changes forms and even in our situation with new students, as professors were here and we try to understand people who are not like us, but we should also think about what's happening right now around us and what are the new forms of power, what are the new forms of trying to get you into a mold, and trying to divide us, because right now we are in a time where competition should not be a good word, being competitive should not be what we all try to be. What we should try to do is collaboration, we should be together, because we are in a society and all the Western world is in societies that are privileged to be better than thy neighbor, this is not how we get stronger, we get stronger by being together and not by being better than your neighbor. And I think that's something to think about for now and for our everyday life.

1:00:02.320 *Carlos*: This has been great. Callum did you have something you wanted to add to that?

1:00:07.340 *Callum*: I did not.

1:00:08.685 *Carlos*: I feel like I learned a lot, I feel like the idea of story based discussions is bouncing around in my head because when I think about the stories that we tell, I mentioned this earlier, how sometimes we want to have a political discussion and people respond with a cultural discussion, but maybe that is the world that they see, that's the story that people want to have, they resist, they find the culture oppressive in the way other people might find the politics oppressive. Maybe that is the resistance and I don't know, there's a lot of stuff to think about I know I'll be mulling this over the next month or so until our next Thought on Tap the second Thursday of December, I want to thank the Laughing Planet again for hosting us, Daniel Enrique Perez and the Core Humanities Program for organizing this. Chris Stancil, Deborah Moddlemog in the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Nevada, Reno, and the entire Reno community I want to thank you all for coming, thanks. (Applause).

END.