

Villarreal Clip 4 Transcript

STUDENT: And could I dismantle systems of oppression from Harvard with a Harvard degree? Yes. But are they going to prepare me for it? Right?

And I don't feel like I've been-- no, really, truly, I feel like I have not been nurtured in this place. And I came in as a fellow at the college, and I had such a supportive work environment, that I thought that Harvard, as a graduate student, would be great. But it hasn't been.

Aside from this class, I've only learned from one of my other classes, out of four. I haven't learned anything new. I don't feel like I've been nurtured. I don't feel like I've been supported. I don't feel like I'm even engaged, academically, to the point that I was as an undergrad. I'm not being challenged.

So all that is to say is, like, I suffer with these questions around compromise in my own life a lot, especially as someone who thinks of themselves as a freedom fighter, but I coexist in systems of privilege all the time. So that's my thoughts.

CHRISTINA VILLAREAL: I'm going to ask if I can try to bring these together, and then I want to be able to get-- I want to look at some curriculum, if we can. But I didn't want to take away from this discussion because I think it's so important, because all of you are-- actually, everything you said wasn't tangential. It was actually directly related.

STUDENT: OK.

CHRISTINA VILLAREAL: Directly. And it is exactly where we are moving next, in terms of when we look at healing justice frameworks, because part of it, the question also becomes, no matter how you exist, once you finish from here, are you going to have the

ability-- do we even conceptualize as a privilege? Are you going to be able to stay true to who you are?

So that speaks to both what you're saying, and the questions you're asking yourself right now, and questions around compromise. And that also goes back to, I think-- I appreciate Tony bringing up this global happiness index and why that even exists, because at the end of the day, if it's about humanity, and even things like joy-- because one of the most debilitating, I think, consequences of depression is the erosion of hope, joy, and well-being. Right? And so in terms of being able to speak back against that and to dismantle that, or to heal from that, what is that going to look like?

One, there's not like a, everybody needs to stay in the sun. Some people need to be in the shade. I think there isn't-- at least not from my understanding of it. I think that's going to be very subjective to every person, in the sum of their lived experiences, right? Because some folks are able to kind of feel like, oh, I can navigate this and I can do this in a way, right?

I think these are questions you're asking, like, no, I can. I'm going to know what to do with that. Is it going to be worth the costs, is some of the questions you're asking. And in the same regard, what do you both, I guess, gain and lose, with every choice that you make and every job that you take?

And as I mentioned, one of the most important pieces, where we're going to end the class is, are you going to be happy? Because if you're waking up every single day and you're, at the very least, you're not happy, then what is it all worth? If you're not healthy, like all the way into it and beyond. And that's not to say they're not going to have compromises or there's going to be moments, but on the whole, because depression is real. Then where is the?

Again, that doesn't mean-- because I think there are so many people who are engaged in anti-racist, anti-oppressive work who are happy as hell. I'd like to think I'm close to being one of those people, for the most part. Because isn't it depressing to constantly teach about this stuff? And I said, no, I actually think it's really empowering, because I feel like you kind of see what people want to then do about it, in these different ways, and then begin to ask the questions, and then helping.

STUDENT: Especially if you practice self-care.

CHRISTINA VILLAREAL: Especially if you practice self-care, and even what that looks like. So it becomes like, no matter where you end up landing, what is it going to look like for you? Because wherever you go, you're going to continue to have those questions, right? And so then it becomes, how do you answer those questions for yourself?

OK, that wasn't part of the plan, our long discussion. It's OK, though. It's OK, though. We're going to-- how we doing Fay Fay? We're OK? We got some discussion on camera, though. We're talking. We're talking to each other.

I want to tell you a little bit about-- well, we've done this. I feel like we've covered this. So I feel like, I was also thinking about these things as we were going through, and I was like, OK, OK. I know where I can cut some corners, in terms of our discussion.

But we might need to move just the desks a little bit, because I'm going to be using the slides. And we'll do that. Maybe I'll put this out into the-- I'll give it to you for now, and then if you all have questions while we're going through it-- I'm going to see how quickly I can go through this, so that we can get into groups.

So you can take a look. You all covered this stuff, in terms of what differentiates ethnic studies from other forms of scholarship, but specifically, Euro-American scholarship.