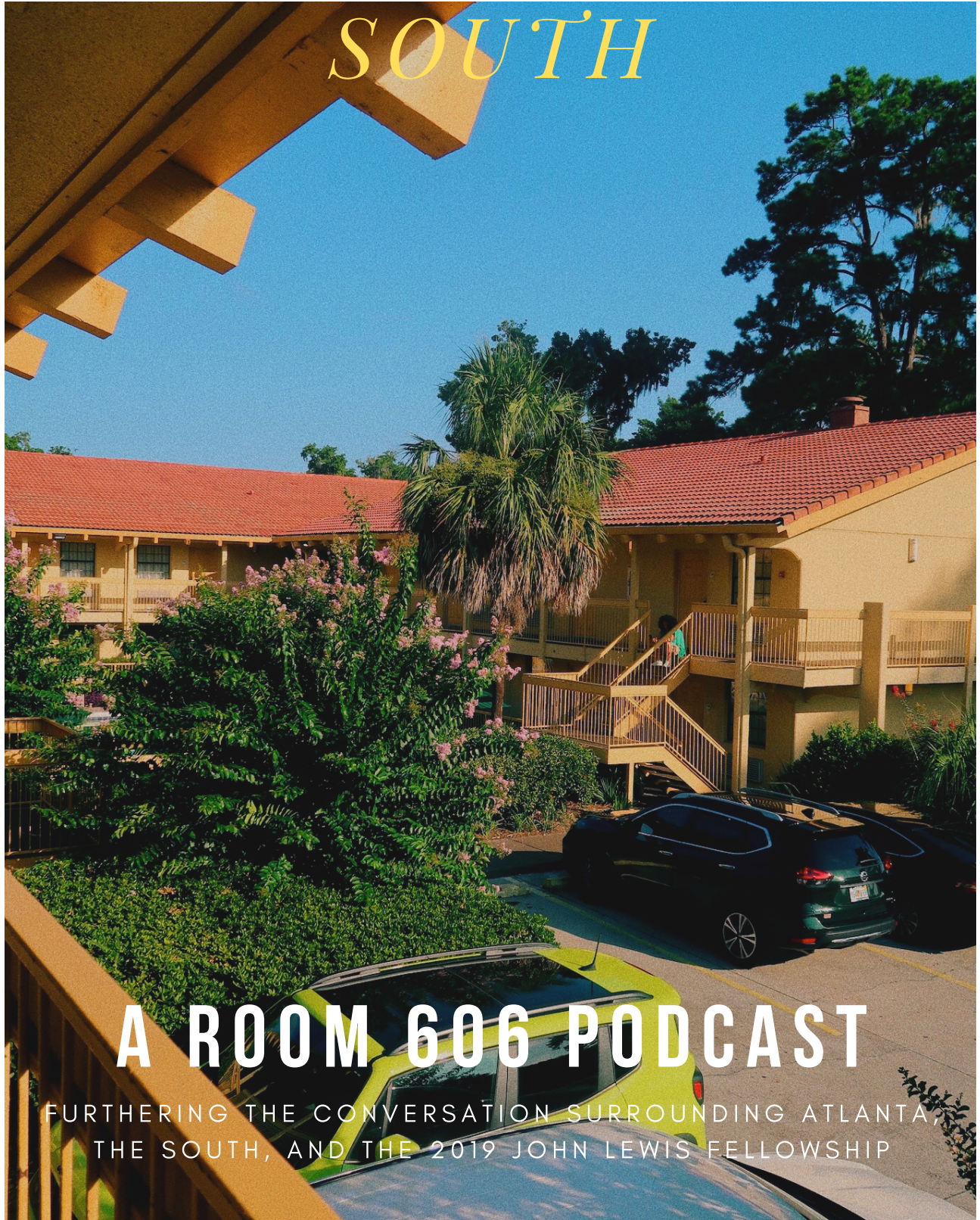


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VIEWS FROM THE SOUTH



A ROOM 606 PODCAST

FURTHERING THE CONVERSATION SURROUNDING ATLANTA,
THE SOUTH, AND THE 2019 JOHN LEWIS FELLOWSHIP

PLUS, BEAUTIFUL PHOTOS FROM
OUR FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCE

THINKING BEYOND: A POST-PODCAST AND FELLOWSHIP CONVERSATION

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE HOSTS OF "VIEWS
FROM THE SOUTH"

"Be not afraid of discomfort. If you can't put yourself in a situation where you are uncomfortable, then you will never grow. You will never change. You will never learn."

- Jayson Reynolds



Humanity in Action's John Lewis Fellowship brought 24 people together from different cities, countries, and continents. All of us, coming from different walks of life, did not know exactly what we would encounter during the month-long program. With open minds and open hearts, we entered into varied spaces with a desire to learn. As we, the hosts of "Views from the South", began to unpack both the podcast and the fellowship, we realized something: this month has been a month of unsettling.

What exactly do we mean by this, you ask? Well, to unsettle is to disturb, to unnerve, upset, and disquiet. Unsure that we could capture this in the podcast episode alone, we created this short zine. We want to explore the following questions: (1) What is one idea or belief that you held prior to the fellowship that was unsettled or challenged during the program?; and (2) how has the program inspired you to take action in your respective communities?

We hope that you enjoy and also take time to reflect on your work.

Best,

Anna, Danielle, Meredith, and Nikolina
Hosts of "Views from the South"

THINKING BEYOND: A POST-PODCAST AND FELLOWSHIP CONVERSATION

DANIELLE MILES-LANGAIGNE
FELLOW FROM BOSTON, MA

My idea of marginalization and oppression being fully felt and understood by everyone experiencing the aforementioned forces was challenged. Prior to the fellowship, I have vehemently emphasized the inaccessible language and spaces that social justice actors and organizations create. Even in the context of this fellowship, you can only participate if you are seeking, or have already obtained, an undergraduate degree. How can we fight with marginalized, oppressed peoples when we engage in behavior that shuts them out?



During a photo challenge, we were tasked with asking people about their thoughts on gentrification in the context of Atlanta. One woman that we spoke to emphasized that she saw a neighborhood shift and that she herself is from a low-income background. Nonetheless, she said that she liked gentrification because it meant a safer neighborhood due to more police intervention. It also meant, from her perspective, that the neighborhood would be cleaner and better taken care of. Initially, I was shocked that she provided this positive response, but it made sense. She may feel the oppression that entails gentrification, and I might have teased out the negative effects if I asked questions that allowed me to do this. Nonetheless, not having the language or systemic understanding that the tentacles or systemic issues like gentrification extend to various parts of one's life. Post-fellowship, I want to take conversations out of intellectual circles and into the communities that are impacted. Conditions can't be ameliorated if the people who will/should be leading the charge are not informed about why institutions should be amended.

THINKING BEYOND: A POST-PODCAST AND FELLOWSHIP CONVERSATION

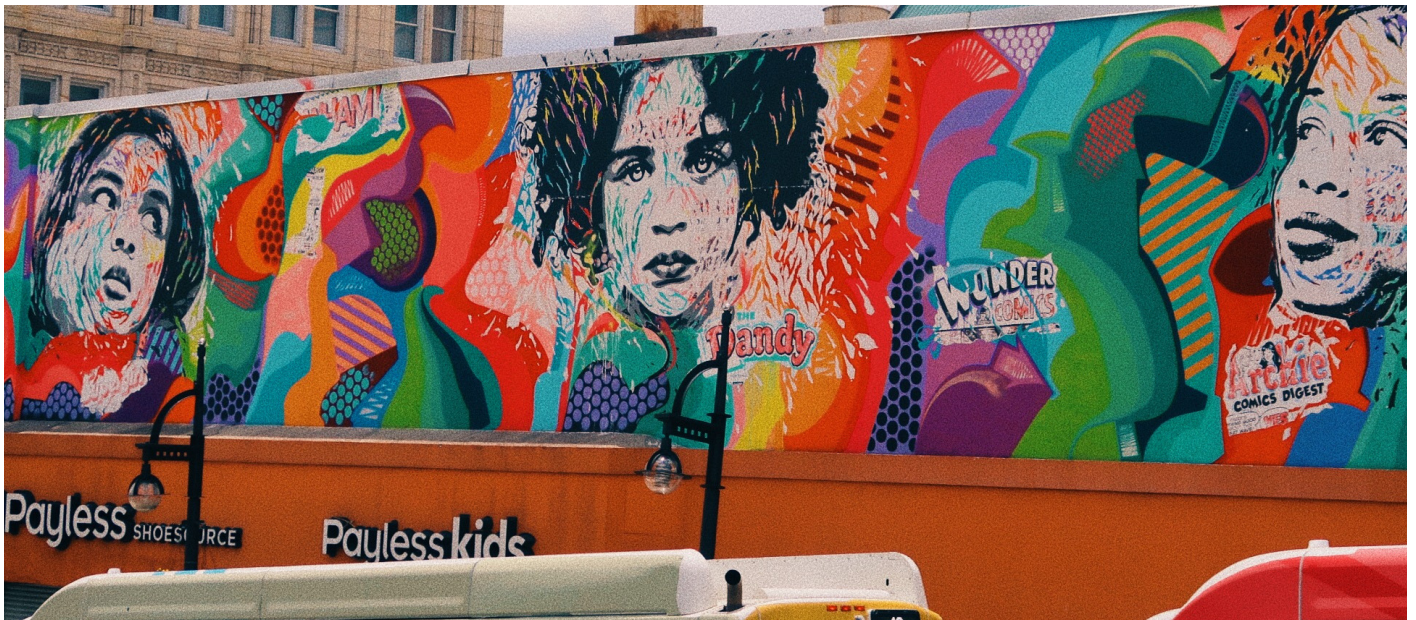
MEREDITH GUDESBLATT
FELLOW FROM LONG ISLAND, NY



As the granddaughter of a holocaust survivor and those whose families fled persecution, pogroms and poverty in Ukraine/Russia, my childhood and coming to consciousness was steeped in the benevolent mythology of the United States as a nation founded by immigrants. The conversations developed and nourished during the fellowship --particularly those prompted by DiAngelo's *White Fragility* (2018), those on the Fourth of July surrounding Tuck and Yang's "Decolonization is not a Metaphor" (2012)—challenged me and complicated my understandings of what it means to be in proximity to whiteness as a Jew in the 21st century, and what it means to be an immigrant in a settler-colonial nation. As I continue my immigration-focused work, I want to hold conversations, inspire, and ultimately accompany others in organizing for both migrant justice within the Jewish community, as inspired by the #neveragainisnow movement. Though I have shied away from this community in the past, for both personal and political reasons, I believe it is one in which I can mobilize others to be an ally to other groups who have historically been allies to us.

THINKING BEYOND: A POST-PODCAST AND FELLOWSHIP CONVERSATION

NIKOLINA SLADOJEVIC
FELLOW FROM BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



Before joining the John Lewis Fellowship I knew that my knowledge about the American history and civil rights movement needed to be expanded. As an European, I was aware of how narrow our historical narratives might be, but what surprised me more is how the American historical narrative is lacking a significant amount of information as well. This program has challenged the way I perceive history and human organizing in many different ways, however, I think one of the most important lessons is that history is not a matter of the past: it tends to replicate itself in the present. At the same time, the events we consider historical are in fact very recent.

During the fellowship we were given the opportunity to speak with some individuals that were directly involved in the civil rights movement, and being part of those discussions was truly inspiring. I often came to the conclusion that oppression comes in all kinds of different shapes, but a majority of them still go under the radar daily. Realizing this inspired me to think about what changes could I bring to my own community. In turn, I have decided to focus my work on promoting youth education on political literacy. This would be a space where I would motivate my peers to join discussions on historical narratives and challenges that we face as a society that went through a recent conflict. By doing so, I hope to help include everybody's voice and further support an effective reconciliation.

THINKING BEYOND: A POST-PODCAST AND FELLOWSHIP CONVERSATION

ANNA WIATROWSKA
FELLOW FROM POLAND



This program really showed me how important it is to know the tools of critical thinking, be brave and venture into different stories about our own community. The single narrative we are told in school might be beneficial to sustain the status quo but in order to make innovative change, we have to find different stories and voices that will allow us to retell the story we once thought we knew so well. I grew up in Bialystok, a city that was once 70% Jewish, but heard only a story about polish one-of-a-kind heroism, exceptionality, and centuries-long suffering.

This leads me to say that I think I have a few insights upon the danger of a single story. In Bialystok, transgenerational transmission of hatred spilled upon nearly every minority identity, which leaves us today with a Bialystok that is white, catholic, heterosexual, cisgender. And although the hatred towards people with disabilities might be not so overt it surely manifests in many covert ways including insensitive language and fear of difference.

We learn history mainly in school and it happens through learning from textbooks and listening to the teacher who has to do almost everything according to the curriculum. The content of the history curriculum can be a very powerful tool to form young people's identity –you can make people attached to the constructed idea of the nation and it can be a very rewarding, even spiritual thing, but building people's self-worth upon national identity can be highly problematic. I want to challenge the idea of kids not being smart enough to figure out for themselves what story about their community empowers them. Providing children with different resources and tools can evoke curiosity for the world in them and the results might be more diverse and inclusive.

So what's the story of your community that's erased and/or forgotten?

THINKING BEYOND: A POST-PODCAST AND FELLOWSHIP CONVERSATION



A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO HUMANITY IN ACTION, OUR
PEERS, AND THE VARIOUS SOULS THAT WE SHARED SPACE
WITH DURING OUR FELLOWSHIP.
