

**OAR BIPOC Cohort**  
**Ebony Janice Guest Presentation Notes**  
**“Dreams as Resistance”**

**Introduction/Background to Ebony Janice**

- Speaks on the language of the “churchy girl” and *The Color Purple*. Shares her messages based off lived experiences and shared experiences even though what she says is also backed up by other scholars.
- Grew up wanting to be a civil rights activist, has a lifetime membership with the NAACP and was the youngest lifetime member ever.
- In her mid-30s she realized that she’s been creating her life from resistance, becoming a tool and resource for people through anti-racist education and wasn’t living out her actual dreams
- Not being racist = literally just talking about human decency which is the bottom of the barrel. Why do we have to work so hard for people to not be harmful to other people?
- Started to blow up on social media, one of her videos went viral – a video of her analyzing a scene of a protest where the police was trying to attack a Black man and her just stating the obvious of how people can’t see things for what they really are. This video went viral and she started to receive a lot of horrible hate messages specifically regarding her race, color of her skin, etc.
- She also helped raise her nephews for 3 months and thought about all the times she had to go to their school to pick up the oldest because he got suspended from school. She confronted the authority at his school and asked them if they could just admit that they don’t have the resources to help young Black boys and to please release him from the school so they could enroll him in another school that does have the resources to help young Black boys thrive. Teachers at her nephew’s school would make inappropriate comments to him like “did you take your meds today” when he would be “acting out.” The school refused to let her nephew enroll in a different school and instead continued to put the ownership on her nephew who is a CHILD, rather than providing him with the resources so that he can succeed.
- After seeing her nephews in those positions, she thought about creating an after-school program for her nephews so that they could have access to all of the resources and tools they need to thrive that they didn’t have access to at their school. However, she had an epiphany as she was thinking through this plan to create a program for her nephews – “why do I have to be doing

this?” She realized she shouldn’t be having to spend all her extra time on top of everything else she’s doing in life, to think of new ways to help meet her nephew’s BASIC needs, so that they can simply just exist. White women don’t have to take up this extra thought space to think of ways that their children can have their very basic needs met.

- Realized through all of this that her doing anti-racist work, being a resource and tool for anti-racist work and racial justice, that the WP who were flocking to her to use her as a resource and tool for anti-racism education were actually causing her more harm than she thought and realized that this is not what she wants to be doing. She thought to herself- “how much of my life is created from resistance?”

### **Dreams As Resistance**

- Even this BIPOC cohort we have is created from resistance. We had to take the time together to learn and form this community just so that we could feel safe for 3 hours every week. As BIPOC, we are trained to believe that fighting for our people will bring us glory, and it’s hard for us to imagine being appreciated for anything outside of a form of resistance.
  - Ex. We are always the one breaking doors, glass ceilings, being the “first of” for many talents, industries, etc. when we shouldn’t HAVE to do those things.
- She lead this same workshop for a group of Black women and asked them to simply just “dream.” She found that it was really hard to get Black women to dream and when she asked them what they would be doing in their highest imagination, she was still getting responses like “create a clinic for BIPOC, teaching black studies, etc.” – Proof that we are so conditioned as BIPOC to think of our dreams from a resistance standpoint. Not that all those things aren’t great, but those are things that we should **already have** as basic human needs. Not things that we need to work hard to create or establish the “first of.”
- Sometimes we think that the only way to get out of this is to petition, to fight, march educate, and we made ourselves believe that we would be successful doing that, but here we are 60 years later still marching, still protesting, about the same thing. Not that marching and protesting and putting up the fight isn’t important – it’s still needed. However, that is not all that we have to or should do for ourselves.
- Breaking down the phrase “we are our ancestor’s wildest dreams” – it’s very arrogant and presumptive to assume that because I don’t believe that in our

ancestor's wildest dreams that we would still be living in resistance. In their wildest dreams, we get to rest, play, be free, feel pleasure, and dream.

- When we talk about liberation, we need to talk about what we are actually going to do and what it looks like for each of us. Need an actual endpoint and not many people speak about this.
- Simply just being “anti-racist” is not the goal. Again, that is the bottom of the barrel- basic human decency that everyone should have. People can still do problematic things even when not actively being racist. **We need to de-center anti-racism and instead center liberation.**

### **Tools/Resources for Liberation**

- **Pleasure as a tool** – Thea Monyee
  - Centering pleasure as a way of liberation. Liberative experience is not just what are we going to do but what we get to do.
  - If we center consent in the pleasure discussion too we can also stop harm.
  - We are worthy of pleasure.
- **Rest as a tool** – Tricia Hersey Patrick (the Nap Ministry)
  - Divert from “busy culture”
  - The pandemic and capitalism is asking us to do more, just from home. Calling on the people who have been harmed to be the educator and do more work. We pride ourselves on working crazy hours and running on no sleep.
  - Get out of the box that we have been socialized into and take a break. Let yourself rest. Center wellness for the purpose of ease – SLEEP!
- **Play as a tool** – Shelah Marie
  - Access to play as an act of liberation
  - Think of all of the healing things we used to do as a child and allow yourself to reconcile those things and things you were not able to do as a child
  - When was the last time you hoola hooped? Colored? Played freeze tag? Skated? Why did we stop doing all those things? Trauma is generational and we need to heal the trauma of our ancestors in the body and through our own bodies.
- **Dreams as a tool** – Ebony Janice
  - Spend time in the fantastic dream world. Be free “get up out of here. Become the most delicious and vibrant version of yourself.
  - Come together to find the thinkers, dreamers and cocreate that.

- Dream the most radical free version of ourselves from our highest imagination.
- Taking the time to dream is using the tools that our ancestors gave us.

**Questions to think about:**

- Question – how much of my life is created from resistance?
- Question – in your highest imagination, is the work that you are doing right now (anti-racism work or any other kind of work) the work you would want to be doing?
- Question – in the actual Afro-future, what does your liberation look like?
- Question – take 5 minutes for yourself to dream and think about what does liberation look like for you in the next 10-15 years?
- Question – what does your liberation look like without resistance?