

Critical Muslim Studies Part II Transcript

Friday, February 26, 2021

0:00:09 Maura Cunningham

Okay, I think we can get started. Thank you to our audience members for joining today's AAS Digital Dialogue. My name is Maura Cunningham and I'm the digital media manager at the Association for Asian Studies. And I'm very pleased to welcome all of you to Critical Muslim Studies Part II. This is part of a mini-series that we're doing within the AAS Digital Dialogue event series as a whole. We had our first discussion of Critical Muslim Studies last month, in January, and we will be continuing this series throughout the spring and into the fall of 2021. So we hope to have many of you join us for future sessions in this mini-series, many thanks to the Henry Luce foundation for funding the AAS Digital Dialogue event series. And to Stan Thangaraj for organizing this mini-series on Critical Muslim Studies. I would like to again welcome all of you for who have joined today, please feel free to put questions in the Q&A box during our speakers presentations and during the Q&A period. And with that, I will hand things over to our moderator for this event. Amira Jarmakani, thank you.

0:01:21 Amira Jarmakani

Hello, everybody, and welcome. Thanks so much for joining, I'm so honored also to have been invited to participate. I'm Amira Jarmakani, she/her/hers and I'm a professor in Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies at San Diego State University. Also currently president at the Arab American Studies Association. Just wanted to give a little bit of framing about this series and what it's about. We're hoping I just have to say, first, that the all of the things that I'm going to say right now about the series were provided to me by Stan Thangaraj, who is just a powerhouse and amazing and has done all of everything for this as far as I can tell, except for the other folks, of course, Molly and others who have like done so many things to to make sure that it goes but I'm just thinking in terms of the vision, and things like that. And I just want to super acknowledge Stan for that. And so grateful for his leadership. And so we're hoping that the space really offers a way to intellectually create community that crosses disciplinary boundaries, and just participate in the work together. It's been a product this space has been a product of conversations with the Association for Asian Studies, the Association for Asian American Studies and the Arab American Studies Association. But as I had mentioned earlier, and I had wanted to say at first it's really Stan's vision and his labor, in organizing across these disciplinary and associational boundaries, we wouldn't have been brought together if it weren't for him and for his vision in that respect. He'd also

like to acknowledge that it wouldn't have been possible without the, in his words incredible leadership, vision and brilliance of Jennifer Ho, Christine Yano and myself. So thank you for those words Stan and also thanks to Asian Studies are giving us the space via this Digital Dialogue series to have the conversation Hilary Finchum-Sung, Maura Cunningham, and Molly DeDona have been wonderful in managing all the schedules and logistics here. And they've just really helped to craft such a great space for dialogue and Digital Dialogue that it is as we all know and feel we're living in these Digital Dialogue times. I almost forgot I had meant to say just like explicitly, I am, I acknowledge that these comments are basically had been provided to me. I have not prepared them and I was acknowledging Stan for them. And I just want to say explicitly like I'm I have there may be there may have been times when I would have felt the need to apologize for such a thing. And so the thing that I want to kind of explicitly state here and have it be recorded as we're all like living lives of digital lives, virtual lives, being recorded lives, that we are living through a global pandemic. [laughs] And it's really like quite amazing to be able to have these spaces and these dialogues and to come together and to have, even more folks are just talking before we started about how it's wonderful not to necessarily be in the physical conference space, where you might get an 8:30 am slot and only like three folks showing up after maybe 15 minutes late, because the coffee line was really long. So it's great to be able to have that. But at the same time, let's acknowledge and give space for just, you know, how hard all of this is and how incredibly overwhelming it is. And you know, just all of what that means. So wanted to kind of like have that in our archives, our digital archives as well.

0:05:23

So the series itself in terms of thinking about Critical Muslim Studies, and again, this is what I'm really excited to be here, to hear about from the panelists today and to have us you know, be able to have a conversation about it as well, are really about the ways that Muslim has become a floating and loaded signifier, meaning many things capturing a wide swath of people. And so this session is really engaging in Critical Muslim Studies, but also looking at how Muslim circulates you know, Muslim itself, the term the category of the concept and an actual people circulate across race, gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, and nation, while showing the many ways that Muslim communities manage relationships to race, caste, nation, class, gender, sexuality, ability, and so on. So, with the ways that various ethno nationalist projects have foregrounded the Muslim as a key side of repudiation or formation, the the conversations that we're going to hear today, address how critical Muslim studies become such an important site for knowledge production and social justice practice. And so that's also like the combination of those two things is something we're really excited to think about and think with each other about. So we hope to put Asian Studies, Asian American Studies and Arab American Studies in conversation through this space while cultivating an intellectual, pragmatic and necessary toolkit that incorporates the theoretical influences of area studies, ethnic studies of Gender and Sexuality Studies, while pushing against canonization really not a big order, [shaking her head] I think, you know, quite doable. Anyway, we don't have to

talk in terms of like what's doable or not doable, we can just put aspirations out and then think about, you know, what it means to like, think through all of that. So Critical Muslim Studies is about the future. It's therefore a space of respect, a space of dialogue and a space of knowledge production. And I think also, we could add to that, this space of thinking about social justice practice. So it's also space to support these scholars, and many others as we think through all these intersections. So we're gonna each presenter is going to offer thoughts on their project for about eight to ten minutes, and then we hope to engage in dialogue with you. I'm going to go ahead and introduce each person who will speak just before they speak. So thanks so much for starting us off. Thomas Simsarian Dolan, who is a PhD candidate in American Studies at George Washington University, focusing on Middle Eastern diaspora and race. Thomas has recently been selected as a Fulbright US teaching scholar and, boy, I don't know if I'm gonna be able to pronounce this correctly, Calouste Gulbenkian, Global Excellence Scholar. He's an alumnus of Yale University, NYU and the New Schools Institute for critical social inquiry. Thomas has also served as a visiting researcher at the Doha Institute for graduate studies, and also published in *Mashriq & Mahjar*, *The Armenian Weekly*, *Huffington Post*, *Muftah*, *Arab America*, and *HowlRound*, among others, and I'd encourage you also to go to the website to get a little bit more his bio, just wanted to welcome your comments now. Thank you.

0:09:23 Thomas Simsarian Dolan

Great. Thank you so much. And thank you so much also for that broader introduction, I hope that I touched on at least some of the themes that I think are possible and important to think through even if we don't come to resolution today. So my project is a series of biographies that examine the complex ways Middle Eastern, or west Asian American identities have been lived in imagine across the 20th century. And I've always personally been confounded by the ways especially minority communities, although I use that that word advisedly, have been invisibilized, denaturalized or de-indigenized, often as white European people somehow adrift in in Asia. And as I delve deeper into my research, I realized that the same processes are often at work for other people from an ambiguously and often strategically to find Middle East including Muslims. So I found this kind of unsettling emphasis in scholarship, you know, on watershed moments, right, such as scholars, you know, quite comfortably indulged what I saw as untenable statements like, well, before 1980, there really weren't really any Muslims in the US popular culture, or there weren't real Muslims or Arabs, you know, until cataclysmic events like through their non white innocence relief. And this is the kind of deassimilation thesis that interrupts a more normative immigrant narrative. But as Michelle has to reminds us, history is always about forgetting. And periodised is a necessary evil and the historians trade. But I'm struck by what are often generational erasers and illusions, and how they've normalized a certain kind of Muslim American subject and assumptions that inflect and bound Muslim studies more more broadly. So I

want to ground my comments today, in a woman I've published on and who is the subject of a second chapter of my dissertation, Aliya Hassen. So Aliya was born to Sunni Arab immigrants in the Beqaa Valley, whose father came to the US around 1880, fleeing the law for tobacco smuggling, via khedival Egypt, New York, Boston and Brazil. In New York, he found a hub of Ottoman migrants and what's been called the Ottoman mosque in lower Manhattan, in Boston, Arab, Turkish Armenian communities, and then, of course, the largest Arab diaspora in Brazil. Ultimately, Aliya's father and uncle homesteaded in Kadoka, South Dakota, just a few miles from Wounded Knee did me like a surprisingly large number of what I dubbed 'prairie Muslims'. And by the time Hassen was born in 1910, the family had moved to Sioux Falls and through the miracle of online digitized resources, I found that the local *Argus Leader* the local paper, published nearly 1500 articles on Mohammed ins often members the Muhammad and church Muslims from 1874 to 1946, including again this is quote unquote, Mohammed and slaveholders in Africa, a glut an Ottoman Turkish Muslims involved in deepening trade with the US and the Armenian genocide, Chinese Muslims who declined the Sultan's declaration of jihad in World War One Indian Muslims, etc. And there were hundreds of articles on Aliya's family to including their bootlegging, which I will come back to an honor of one of the other panelists. After an arranged marriage, another left her widowed has moved to Detroit, where she found many other formerly Ottoman Muslims, including Arabs, Kurds, and especially Albanians. It was in New York, however, that she really came into her own, marrying her last husband, Egyptian Ali Hassen. You know in there, she protested the Suez Crisis alongside the Muslim Brotherhood and Egyptian Socialist Farmers party. She founded an Islamic sorority in Egyptian Arab American Seamen Society, she worked as an assistant to the Islamic center of DC called on Saudi Prince Talal bin Abdulaziz, was chairperson of the Islamic center of New York, and was second vice president of the Federation of Islamic Associations in the United States and Canada. And so for the FIA, she published dozens of articles in it's organ, *The Muslim Life*, which had formerly been *The Albanian Muslim Life* published out of Detroit, with an Albanian editor trained at elazar, a Lebanese Shia American publisher, and writers who were Sunni, Shia, Sufi, Arab, Indian, Pakistani, West African, you know, as well as American converts. So, I offered that framing to ask the question, how is it that we lose track of someone like Hassen and the robust Muslim American worldview articulated in the first half of the 20th century? So I kind of want to offer a little bit of a precis as some hypothesis hypotheses as to why that happens. So the first would be US geopolitics, as well as Turkish historiography right, that dovetailed to obscure Ottoman history. Right and this is in part the US soft pedaling Armenian Genocide recognition for the sake of trade, the Turkish Republic's kind of reinvention, rebranding as a white secular state descended from the Hittites, not the Ottomans, as well as later US-Turkey relations that tightened during the Cold War, particularly since Turkey was a Democrat ally and an ally of Israel. So this meant that the Ottomans were written off as like the absolute nadir of Middle Eastern history, right and often an obstacle in the way of indigenous nationalisms like Arab nationalism, as well as you know, Armenian nationalism, Kurdish nationalism. And so

these nationalist frames mean that we generally forget that Aliya's father leaves an automated world, right, and that there's a prohibition on Sunni Muslim emigration from the Ottoman Empire, a prohibition on Armenian immigration at all, as well as the short lived Muslim ban in the 1890s in the US. So these occur as a result of complicated bilateral if not multilateral, negotiations between the Ottomans the US and European empires, attempting to manage the dense networks and mobilities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. I think a second obstacle here is whiteness and assimilation. So, because of these bands on emigration and immigration, there was value if not necessity in claiming non Muslim identities for many Ottoman Muslim immigrants. And you see these really complicated and confusing dynamics that demonstrate like first how little immigration officials are able to parse Ottoman identities or were able to parse pardon me Ottoman identities, and the need to claim Christian identities at both Ottoman points of departure, like Beirut or Cairo, as well as points of entry in the Americas. So often, you know, Ottoman migrants intentionally obscured identities, right? And many immigration officials were none the wiser, you know, often to claim ambiguous and later litigated whiteness or Christian identities. And I'm not alone here in pointing out many other scholars have also noted that there's an undercounting of Muslims among automated migrants, and then later, a discrediting of these migrants is only nominally you know, or flimsily Muslim, right? And this occlusion has been reiterated by both restrictive immigration regime regimes after world war one in the US, as well as kind of mid century phenomena and epistemology, including scholarship from Alixa Naff, you know, the mother of Arab American Studies. Then kind of mid-century nascent Black Muslim studies, and even groups like the AAUG, the Association of Arab American University Graduates. So I checked the AAUG as part of another chapter on Edward Said where I demonstrate how the AAUG telescope the Middle East into an Arab Islamic civilizational hole. But in doing so, obscured, you know, other Ottoman peoples while producing a normative Arab subject was leftist, secular, Arab nationalist, and politicized. So in part, this assumption, and this intervention, particularly into MESA in Middle East Studies, obscures the preeminence of earlier images of terrible Turks. Around the time of Armenian genocide. The plurality of images of Islam produced in Aliya Hassen's hometown paper, as well as Arab Americans like Aliya herself. And one of the first AAUG publications was actually Arab Americans Studies and Assimilation. And so on this note, I found it compelling. And we were just talking about Ann Arbor in Michigan, before the session started, that Aliya shows up in the AAUG archives in a photo dutifully staffing the registration desk at the 10th annual AAUG convention in Southfield there she was neither a full nor typical member, and that she didn't have a university degree, was a woman and a grandmother at that time, and was a committed Muslim. The AAUG and many associated scholars also made avert analogies between Arabs in the US and communities of color, right, so producing a normative Arab Muslim subject as non white. You know, at the contrary end of the spectrum, though, many Black Muslims like Malcolm X, with whom Aliya associated, right, helped to plan his Hajj and that of his wife Betty. You know, these Black Muslim communities often wrote off Arab and other Muslim Americans as whitewashed or invested in converting white as

opposed to Black Americans. You know, that said Malcolm is really interesting and inconsistent on his racialization of Eastern Muslims. But it's telling that Aliya, you know, work with Malcolm the Nation of Islam and later Muslim Mosque Inc. and with Mahmoud Shawarbi, the president of the Islamic Center of New York, and then later director of the Federation of Islamic Associations. Whom, some have called Malcolm's mentor in kind of more Orthodox Sunni Islam. At the same time, many Muslims can test your control of US mosques and newly formed organizations like the MSA tended to look down on earlier generations of Muslims viewed as inauthentic or assimilated, particularly people like Aliya. And in this regard Egyptian Abdo A. Elkholy, 1960 dissertation *Religion Assimilation in Two Muslim Communities in America* proved to be endlessly influential. And he argues that the Detroit community was assimilated and not really Muslim versus the Toledo community, who are more devout or he thought were more devout in spite of their being kind of infamous as bootleggers and bar owners. So there were both newer immigrants tied to regimes abroad, including North African men, Levantine regimes, Gulf monarchies, as well as countries and governments in South Asia, who were exporting their own understanding of normative Islam usually Sunni, right an arena in which many American Muslims like Aliya, were often found wanting. So I know that I've raced through a lot of information here for the sake of time, but I really did want to offer this kind of tentative precis of, of how activism, evolutions in American immigration and religious life, and the impossibly interconnected phenomena of knowledge production, have obscured these earlier Muslims, right, and certainly prairie Muslims right to say nothing of enslaved Muslims in centuries past. So as Asian American Studies, and Asian Studies increasingly go west, in thinking about West Asia, so to speak, I urge that we very carefully considered the Ottomans and how its history is conjured abroad, often through diaspora and how this articulates a normative or kind of narrow, Muslim subject, a West Asian subject and even the frames and bounds of our scholarship writ large. That's all I got. Thanks so much.

0:20:30 Amira Jarmakani

Thank you. Lots to think about there and can also already see some of that connections to other speakers. So with no further ado, we'll move on to Atiya Hussain, who is an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Richmond. Her ethnographic research on race and Muslim communities in the US has explored how Muslims are positioned relative to the black-white racial binary, as well as how Islamophobia is invoked in ways that reproduce intra Muslim racism and imperial articulations of anti racism. She is currently working on a book manuscript on the FBI Most Wanted program. The book explores the relationships between terrorism, race, religion, and black radicalism from 1950 until today. So welcoming your comments.

0:21:22 Atiya Husain

Thank you, Amira. And thank you, Thomas, for the shout out to Toledo, Ohio. I'm from there. And so we were talking about that earlier, and I have so many questions. But generally, it's really cool to be here. And also want to add to the thanks to Stan for organizing this. And I was at the last Digital Dialogue for this. And it was really great. And I really enjoyed learning about everybody's work, so so it's really nice to be here. Overall, my work is guided by an interest in race and Islam. And I look at how race constitutes a material reality and organizing principle in a European colonial structure of thought. And a contested idiom that is claimed and deployed in multiple and often contradictory ways. So with this general interest, there is that ethnographic project that Amira mentioned, but I'm not going to talk about that today. That was my dissertation. And right now, instead, I'm working on a book manuscript on the FBI Most Wanted program, so totally separate project. The FBI Most Wanted program started in 1950. And in my book, I'm using archival methods to investigate how the bureau constructed terrorism in their program from 1950 until today, so I study the thousands of FBI wanted posters over these years with a focus on its terrorism lists. And those started in 2001, for obvious reasons. As you can imagine, the archetypal brown Muslim terrorist has a very important place on those lists. But my main argument is that we can't understand the brown Muslim terrorist without understanding how the FBI establishes a relationship between terrorism and black politics. For example, if you look at the most wanted terrorist list today, and actually would encourage you to Google it, if you feel comfortable, just like FBI Most Wanted terrorists list and just look at the images of who shows up. And what you'll see there is that Assata Shakur of the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army is on that list, even though she is now elderly, and has political asylum in Cuba, which is a sovereign state and thus has that right to provide political asylum. So you have her on that list. And then you have a sea of brown Muslim men and one Arab woman and she was added over the past couple of years, but mostly brown men, and then you have Assata Shakur. So it's a very striking contrast. And what this tells you is that the FBI is invested in maintaining that association between terrorism and black politics that it really started to bring together in the 1970s. So one of my arguments is that the FBI, his earliest counterterrorism operations, targeted black radicalism in the 70s. But within that, specifically black radical epistemologies. And to understand the significance of this, we must understand the construct called the Negro and its relationship to Islam. So moving on to that, Cedric Robinson, a giant of the black radical tradition shows how the Negro was invented or fabricated to serve as an endless labor source in western capitalism. He says, quote, "this Negro was a wholly distinct ideological construct from those images of Africans that had preceded it", end quote. Even images that were negative, earlier words like ethiop, and more corresponded to regions, civilizations, religions, or they were the words that people use for themselves. But the word Negro does not correspond to any of these. The Negro is thus a construct of a people untethered to geography, history, religion, and civilization. So this Negro construct carries on and it defines the lives of the descendants of slaves well into the mid 20th century. So for example, in the 60s, Malcolm X would sum up this history of

fabrication, and he would say, they take you out of existence by calling you a negro. So rarely would he and the rest of the Nation of Islam use the word Negro without saying so called in front of it. So as Muslims, there was an aspect of this erasure that they were especially aware of, and that was the erasure of Islam from Africa, which was a significant part of constructing the Negro for capitalism to begin with. Many of Europe's pre-modern encounters were at with Africans were simultaneously encounters with Islam, but modern European history cleaved Africa from Islam, and this fabrication was hard work because Islam had indigenized in Africa soon after the seventh century, and further, Africans served every role from slaves to Kings and Islamic empires. But for Europeans, this cleaving was necessary in a way for the outcomes that they desired, since the Muslim or Orient represented for them a powerful rival, and the Negro had to represent something that was destined for subordination, since its purpose was racial slavery. Medieval Europeans up till the mid-15th century had a robust slave trade of Slavs and Irish, Welsh, Greek Scandinavians, Russians, Turks, all kinds of people. But by the 16th century, they began to reserve slavery only for Africans who were brought into the new world system into this category of Negro. And again, the purpose of the construct was as an endless labor supply. And so Western capitalists thought about this Negro as a commodity, who would not know in any other way of being. So if we skip ahead to the mid 20th century, where my work picks up the Negro construct, and the western capitalism that created it faced a challenge on a global scale. And that challenge would be among the first things called terrorism by the state in the 1970s. So within that Black radicals specifically rejected the category of the Negro, which is to say they rejected the epistemological and material terms of Western capitalism, in which they are property. So I argue that their rejection is part of why the FBI characterizes them as terrorists to begin with. It's not because of the violence associated with them. And we can talk about, you know, we can talk more about that if you want. But it really zeroes in on the epistemology of Black radicalism. So we were asked to talk about how our work interacts with Asian Studies, right. So these black radical geographies and histories that are criminalized through counterterrorism work extensively with the geographic category of Asia, for example, the FBI understands the Moorish Science Temple of the 1920s as a precursor to what it calls black identity extremism today, the Moorish Science Temple of America was the first Muslim organization in the US. And it was comprised of people who would easily be described as African American, but they understood themselves as Asiatic which is to say indigenous, they said that they are not Negro, or colored or black or any of these things, because they understood Asia and the Americas as sort of one big geographic space, kind of like Pangea, and they believe that the natural religion of Moorish, Asiatic, Indigenous people is Islam. So their identities as Moorish correspond to a different geography, from the Euro American geography that informs the system of racial identities and Western capitalism. So to answer that question about the relationship between my work in Asian Studies, I think we share a geographic concern. And my interest is in the epistemological underpinnings of such geographies, in how they inform racial systems. So I'll end with a broad question that animates my project. And I'm sure many of yours as well, and critical Muslim

studies in general, I think, and that's on- My questions are, what are the normative implications of research on Islam and race? In other words, what are the problems that we're pointing to? And how are we naming them? Are we naming them in such a way that works in the interest of whatever change we wish to work toward? Or are we naming and studying race and Muslims in a way that retrenches these problems however we identify them? In other words, what are possible epistemological terms of engagement in this heavily politicized area of study, and to what end? So I will stop there. And thank you.

0:30:49 Amira Jarmakani

Thank you so much for those comments on the framing. Exciting both of your exciting projects. We have a third set of comments, but I think they are going to come to us from a recording so I'll go ahead and do the intro of our last speaker, who is Inaash Islam, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology at Virginia Tech. She's interested in the implications of digitally mediated narratives of Muslim womanhood, race, religion, Islamophobia, and immigration in the lives of diasporic Muslim women. Her upcoming work contextualizes contemporary conversations around Muslima social media influencers, public acts of de-jabbing, in other words, taking off the hijab, within discourses of Islamophobia, to offer insight into the kinds of racialized and gender responsibilities that are imposed on Muslim women by Muslim Asian and Arab American communities in western spaces. She shows that Muslima influencers navigate and negotiate with these expectations in various ways. But in doing so run the risk of the double bind that is critiquing the Desi and Arab Muslim communities gender surveillance at the cost of reinforcing Islamophobic and liberal Western feminist narratives with Muslim misogyny, and Muslima oppression. And then, as I mentioned too, she may be joining us momentarily, but have was is was not has not been able to join live right now or up until now. So we'll be watching the recording of her comments.

0:32:35 Maura Cunningham

If you all could just give me one minute.

[Maura Cunningham starts playing pre-recorded comments of Inaash Islam]

0:32:45 Inaash Islam

Good afternoon, everyone. I just wanted to begin by thanking the Association for Asian Studies and Dr. Stanley Thangaraj in particular for putting together this amazing dialogue series and for extending the invitation to speak about my work alongside the amazing scholars who make up this great panel. So thank you. As for my contribution to today's dialogue, I'm going to begin by posing some questions to listeners and the

panelists, and then follow that up by introducing my research and connection to those questions. So to begin, I'd love to get folks to think about how we understand notions of Muslim womanhood, especially as these are grounded in contemporary contexts of Islamophobia, and discourses of the Global War on Terror. More specifically, to what extent is Muslim womanhood associated with the racialized marker of the hijab? How is Muslim womanhood connected to the Muslim embodied in western spaces, and how our notions of Muslim womanhood is shaped by discourses of racialization, gender, and Islamophobia. And in order to parse that out of it, I'm going to recap some of the important scholarship over the past two decades, that have sought to examine Muslim womanhood and its notions particularly in relation to the Global War on Terror. Much of the scholarship has actually demonstrated that Muslim women occupy a unique position within discourses of the Global War on Terror, giving rise to how we currently understand Muslim womanhood. We know that the Global War on Terror produces, reifies, and relies on essentialized notions of Islam, Muslims, and the Muslim world in order to allege that Islam and its adherence pose a very visceral threat to Western ideals of freedom, democracy and equality. Mass Media portrayals of Muslims and Western media have actually worked in tandem with structural policies and liberal Western feminism in order to uphold these essentialized notions and construct a threatening Muslim other. Of course, the Muslim mother is gendered. Muslim men as other are portrayed as angry, dark-skinned, bearded and violent men prone to brutality, while Muslim women are portrayed as subjugated by the Muslim patriarchy and almost always clad in black or [indistinct] or the hijab, thereby symbolizing their oppression. In these cherrypicked images that highlight the distressing notions or conditions of Muslim women, the hijab or the burqa clad woman remains a constant icon. As a political device, the hijab has been used to generalize almost a woman's experiences and erases subjectivities while continuing to play an overwhelming role in defining Muslim women's lives during the Global War on Terror. Made to seem synonymous with a Muslim woman. The hijab has consistently been used to define the Muslim woman image, which when contextualized and context of a Islamophobia overrides all other identities to constitute these woman's primary identity, according to Meriam Cooke. In doing so, this marker has arguably shaped notions of Muslim womanhood and undergirded the gendered and racialized experience of Muslim women in the 21st century. However, I'd like to point out here that notably, the non hijabi Muslima has remained virtually absent from conceptualizations of the Muslim woman and established notions of Muslim womanhood. And perhaps even more invisible within the theorisation is the de-jabed Muslim woman. Or the hijabi Muslim woman who has decided to take off her hijab. The invisibilizing of these women from this scholarship begs the question, how does a Muslimist non-hijabed body complicate the notion of the Muslim woman? How does she fit within these conceptions? And how does she fit within discourses of racialization, gender, and Islamophobia? Well, in my current work, that is exactly what I'm examining. I pay particular attention to how the act of the de-jabing, that is taking the hijab off and the de-jab he was a woman not only complicate notions of Muslim womanhood, but also forced the reconceptualization of these very notions. In my work, I

pay attention to how conceptions of notion of Muslim womanhood are critiqued and embodied by hyper visible Muslim women, mainly Muslim, female social media influencers, who have decided to de-jab on their social media platforms. And when I say de-jab, I don't mean that they physically perform the act of taking off their hijab, but that they wear their hijab on their social media platforms, their photos and videos and identified as hijabi influencers and hijabi women, but then at one point in time, decided to take off their hijab, and identify as non hijabi in both their personal and public lives. De-jabi influencers in particular have received a significant amount of backlash from their followers and non followers, a majority of whom are Muslim, for having taken off their hijab. Since the hijab serves as a litmus test of a woman's piety, modesty and religiosity the common assumption of Muslim audiences is that in taking off the hijab, a Muslim woman is publicly stating that she is no longer practicing, that she's lacking in the faith, or that she is somehow disassociated from the religion altogether. Consequently, Muslim a de-jabis have received a barrage of hate judgments and policing, from Muslim communities both online and offline, for having made what is clearly a personal decision in their personal lives. By examining the hate that these women are receiving and have received for de-jabing, what I'm finding in my work is that the act of de-jabing, and the gendered and racialized performance of the Muslim woman when contextualized in western Islamophobic spaces, actually informs us a great deal about the nuances that undergird contemporary Muslim womanhood. More specifically, the conversations around de-jabi Muslim women, the policing of their body, the questioning of their piety, religiosity and faith, especially by Western Muslim communities, informs us of the nature of Muslim womanhood, and the gendered burden of representing the faith that is often placed on the shoulders of Muslim women, whether they're hijabi or not. In particular, contemporary notions of Muslim womanhood are undergirded by not only the racialization of Muslims and Muslim communities during the Global War on Terror, but these notions actually emerge as a reaction or response of Muslim communities to their racialization and this reaction takes on a very gendered nature. In her work on the Islamic revival of Egypt in the 1970s, cultural anthropologist Saba Mahmood noted that Egyptian Muslim women are often viewed by their communities as being responsible for preserving the sanctity of their communities, or preventing their sexualization by the male gaze, by exhibiting piety through wearing the hijab. And by adhering to modest embodiment practices. These gendered cultural expectations which are also evident in Desi communities, in other Arab communities, and often Muslim immigrant communities in the West actually take on a racialized nature when they're transplanted in western spaces where Islamophobic and racialized discourses are prevalent in these spaces the Muslim community writ large is contending with fears of secularization, the loss of cultural traditions, the effects of racialization, and are facing the need to subvert orientalist narratives of Desi, Arab, and Muslim misogyny. Consequently, the Muslim community's reaction has been to impose the responsibility of representing the faith and the Muslim community on Muslim woman's shoulders, often policing and expecting that Muslim women hijabi, or not, perform the ideal Muslim womanhood, which seems to be envisioned as a Muslim woman who is strong in the

face of Islamophobia, pious in the face of secularization, and agentic and empowered but culturally amenable for the benefit of both the western gaze and the Muslim community. So to kind of wrap up this talk, what these notions actually underscore is that not only are hijabi Muslim woman constrained by racialized and gendered forces of a Islamophobia, but de-jabi or even non-hijabi Muslim women are also constrained, albeit in different ways, as a result of their gendered and religious identities and affiliations. Lastly, I think that it's important to think about the different ways in which contemporary Muslim womanhood is being conceptualized not only from the approach of Islamophobic or Orientalist discourses, but also by Muslim communities within these spaces and by Muslim women themselves. Thank you.

[Innash Islam joins the webinar live]

0:41:53 Amira Jarmakani

And we are also joined by the live Inaash Islam. Thank you, welcome.

0:41:58 Inaash Islam

Thank you, sorry for the outfit change.

0:42:01 Amira Jarmakani

But you're still in the same spot. That is so amazing. So cool. I noticed that we all we already have some questions in the Q&A. And so I thought it would- I think, you know, what we're gonna want to do now is just sort of like transition into that do the Digital Dialogue piece of all of this, and ideally, get us all in conversation together. I noticed, of course, as I'm sure many others did. Some themes that certainly emerged from all of your comments thinking about I was interested in how the question of indigeneity for instance, crossed, at least in particular, Thomas, and Atiya's comments like thinking through, what does that category mean, and how can we think about that? But also, noticing, you know, thinking through all of you really spoke to this question, which I think is also really foundational to bringing together what critical is some dialogues wants to bring together, what is obscured in the kinds of categories that were using all of your papers really spoke to that question, quite profoundly. And given that, I think, actually, we could begin maybe with the first question in the Q&A, which is precisely about this category critical Muslim studies, so I'll just read it out. It comes from Shaista Patel, I'm really excited and grateful to be here. Is it okay to ask all the speakers what, if anything, do they see innovative or more capacious about critical Muslim studies in relation to Muslim studies in Islamic Studies, as these circulated until the early 2000s in North American academia?

0:43:53 Thomas Simsarian Dolan

I can offer a thought a tentative thought everything I'm saying today is going to be tentative. I've said that word 20 times but to stand my ground, I think that in my mind part of what we see in these, what kind of is a three line in all of our papers and certainly something that I'm thinking with a lot and what I think the kind of critical piece does, right? It's not to sound, you know faddish and say oh critical means that you do deconstructive work, or that you do transnational work, or you take up any number of kind of like, frames or metrics that are now kind of in, you know, are de rigueur, but I but I do think that a central part of my project is resisting received knowledge, in particularly categorizations. Right, or insofar as we have these categories that are liberatory, right, or they help us to see things. So for my work, I think, why I see it doing kind of critical Muslim studies, you notice in the figure that I talked about, she's someone who's often written off, right as, as a proper Muslim subject, in part because she's not a hijabi, for instance, right? I've given this, you know, work on her. And I see one of these other questions was about recommending an article. So I'll drop that in the chat now for a reason, in that this is an article on Aliya Hassen, and the image that I chose, is of her changing a tire in DC, it's like, feels so idiosyncratic, it's very, very me but I but what I loved about the image was that it up ends so much of what I think are assumptions of Muslim womanhood in 1961, or, you know, whatever the date is. So I think that what critical Muslim studies in my mind enables is to think about, rather than assume we have a stable object of study, but to say, well, no, we don't. Let's kind of interrogate what is Muslim, what is American, you know, and and kind of think about how these categories are created and often congealed in certain figures, right, like the brown terrorist, you know, and I was struck in both of your presentations, there's so much stuff that that I want to talk about. But I was like, I wish I had done that to you, you've said so many things that I've like thought. But I think thinking about these connections, and these kind of seemingly disparate sites, that are all participating together in the construction of certain assumptions. That's I think, what the kind of critical for me does in critical race theory and critical Muslim studies is kind of really kind of unlearning, right, and deconstructing in the process of even producing archival work, you archivally based work as I am.

0:46:26 Atiya Husain

I'll just add a little bit to that. But on a different part of the question, focusing more on work that came out prior to the 2000s, if I'm understanding the question correctly, and what that brings to mind, for me, is a lot of the historical work that was published a lot in the in the 90s, specifically in Islamic Studies. So most of what I work on is the US. And so in the US, what you had in the 90s, as far as Islamic Studies goes, is this proliferation of archives on the histories of enslaved people in South Carolina and other parts of the US, as well as slave narratives, and all of these archives that just give you a, a different understanding of what is the Muslim in this country. So I think sometimes

that is understood, as oh, you know, we should recognize Black history. And these were the original Muslims in this country, the first to come here and so on. But what these works published in the 90s, in Islamic studies do is that foundational epistemological shift, so I'm thinking about the work of Michael Gomez, Ronald Judy, and Sylviane Diouf, just to name three people working in this area. And that, to me, is what was really promising about the work coming out prior to 2000 that I hope we continue to engage with. So I don't think it's dead. And I don't think it should be. But yeah, I'll leave it at that.

0:48:14 Inaash Islam

And I'll just add to Atiya's comment, in particular, and Thomas's pointing to what defines the proper Muslim subjects, I think critical Muslim studies has significant potential in terms of helping us broaden our conceptualization of who is Muslim, how- what does the Muslim look like, how does a Muslim behave? And delving into that definitely allows us to go beyond the reductive assumptions about who we define as being Muslim and the performative behavior isn't the embodiment practices and whose body is racialized, whose bodies not. Would it be a great, really great area by which we can undertake work in critical Muslim study? So I'll just add that as a good end point.

0:49:02 Amira Jarmakani

Yeah, thank you so much. And I think, you know, you all have already spoken to it, but as your different papers touched on, we have both the sides of the ways that the out sort of outside perceptions of Muslims and in various locations in the Americas and so on. And so for instance, like, Thomas, so when you're in your comments, we were talking about the category of the "Mohammedan". Right, like, how does the category like this shape, you know, or how did it shape perceptions of Islam in the Americas? Or that moment, I often teach and begin my feminist thought, or feminist theories classes by teaching Angela Davis's question about Assata Shakur, and on being on FBI most wanted list where she says like, what does it mean, that at this moment in time, this is the face that the FBI decides to put on the most wanted list? So also this question of like, what, what are what are the porous nature? What is the porous nature of the kinds of categories and the ways that folks are getting put together that your project there are really exciting current project is putting this thinking through. And, Inaash, of course, your work, also thinking about the very public nature of social media influencers, right, and like, what the kind of like, interactions back and forth between folks engaging with the influencers, but also around like, notion mediating notions of cultural authenticity, whatever that may mean, are so internal to like Muslim ness, and defining that as well as like these external perceptions of you know, what, you know, you can be Muslim, unless you're wearing hijab or some other kind of perception, right? Yeah, but going back to, not to dominate with my own things, going back to the Q&A. Thanks for noting that Thomas, that somebody had asked for a few all could suggest one of your

publications that capture some of the arguments that you've made today. So if you had any others that you would want to draw? And then we have kind of individual questions, do we want to take? From the amazing, Stan, some of the questions to you individually, as well. Sort of looking through them myself, shall I? Is it helpful if I read them? Perhaps for the recording, that would be helpful. I know if you all can bear with me think maybe I'm going to read all three of them. And I feel like in the process of that there may actually be intersections certainly in the questions to the three of you. So to Atiya, we have how does this Western epistemological material term also become challenged and appropriated in ways that work alongside the global decolonization movements in the 1950s and 1960s? And also the civil rights movement? And how does this also create a collaborative space that can unravel and deconstruct Western geographies? So thinking about the kind of you talked about an epistemological term through the category of the Negro term, and how the rejection of that and also the framing of that as a kind of endless labor supply, and you're connecting that to Cedric Robinson's notion of racial capitalism, so thinking about that as an epistemological piece, but then there's also the part of the question around geographies, which you all three of you spoke to as well, I think, in many ways, like how to put these categories in relation to geographies. So second question to Thomas. I was fascinated by the dismissal of Muslims in US history, and it's erasure. How is the emergence of Muslim, not in not expected destination sites also sites where Muslim becomes the most knowable, unpalatable category of difference? So that kind of like doubleness I'm thinking particularly about how mining town sought out international workers, including from Asia and West Asia, but are often situated as Muslim. How does location matter both in resettlement and in the street of migration? So bringing in geography but also like particular local kinds of manifestations. And then finally, Inaash, I love your work, it is so important and spectacular. I'm wondering how does the Muslim woman become embedded in the discourse of liberal democracy? In particular, I'm interested in knowing how the hijabi Muslim woman is seen as practicing freedom in the West and secure as Western spaces as progressive and liberal and democratic. What is this relation to the non hijabi woman and her interpolation and Western epistemic of the democratic and liberal?

0:54:14 Atiya Husain

I guess I should start, probably. So, Stan, I think that question really zeroes in on the context from which my research emerges. So 1950, the decolonization era, as they call it, that is very much the context where you have this epistemological shift taking place, through material solidarities, between colonized people as they understood themselves, and all these different parts of the world, you know, you had Black radical movements, saying that they will send people to serve in XYZ, you know, anti colonial armies in different places. So that was the moment the nation was the category of interest at the time around which these identities are being questioned and built. So the Cold War context is really important for that geographic rethinking, you have the first world versus

the second world. And then you have the kind of emergence of third world, as you know, where questions of self determination can really be developed. They can't be developed in the frameworks of the first world, or the second world was the was the conclusion. So self determination is a geographic question. Solidarity is a geographic question. And I think it has an interesting lesson for us today, in that solidarities, across difference, do require rethinking the foundations that give birth to that difference to begin with that, yeah, we are all different from each other in any given way, we can slice it any way that we like. But what I really like about your question is that it's pushing us to dig deeper into what generates the differences that we want to identify with. And the ones that we're okay with sidelining in the interest of working together or building together. So yeah, thanks for that question.

0:56:35 Thomas Simsarian Dolan

Atiya, I love that, that what you just said, I was like, I wish I had tried to scribble it down as you said it, but I think that thinking about, we're trying to parse what's created, the difference in the first place is so key. Or certainly in my thinking about like, you know, are these why do these categories exist? And what work do they do? Or in some cases, what I'm critiquing is the work that they don't do, you know, but to kind of build off your question and try to offer a response to Stan. So my work, particularly in this context, I'm thinking a lot with say, like with Phil Deloria's work *Indians in Unexpected Places*, or Zareena Grewal's work *Islam is a Foreign Country*, to think well, what does it mean? You know, when we see Muslims, right, or the title of my dissertation, I call them "unusual figures". What does it mean when they pop up in these unexpected places and seem to and seem to live lives, you know, and understand themselves as being Arab and Muslim or whatever, right? And claiming identity, even if those identities are not legible to the state actors, right, or to scholars, who uplifts, you know, certain people in certain moments. So as a way to kind of build on Atiya, what you said. I'm very much like a Binyamin person, you know, so like, I think, with the theses on history all the time. So I think we do see connections, and do see the past with greater clarity, you know, and flashes in moments of danger, like this kind of cold war moment, right, when there are suddenly this proliferation of solidarities and possibilities, right. Or, as Said would say about theory, we suddenly see the world in new ways, and we see connections that weren't there before, right. So I think that grounding things historically is very useful and essential, right. But I'm also really interested in kind of de-exceptionalizing, or not fetishizing these particular historical junctures, you know, whether it is the proliferation of like images of Muslims post 9/11. Okay, that's that's one thing, right? But we cannot treat that as the sole representation has a more complicated, you know, genealogy and connections to both the past and many, many, many different geographic sites. So I think that one thing that I think with a lot in my work as well is, I'm really resistant and are disinterested in authenticity as a category, which I think is a destructive one in in several spheres. Right. But I think that also has to do with, again, categories, and a

Muslim looks like this in this place, or must be from here and must be XYZ, which I don't think is really, really that useful. And another something else I'm invested in doing is kind of dealing with like ugly archives, right? Or maybe like ugly feelings and Atiya, I'm struck, of course, that well, and Inaash you're also working with this, right, like, what are the often destructive, offensive, problematic assumptions that are projected onto certain bodies, right, but I think it's worth interrogating those assumptions as part of this global discursive field that is producing the idea of the Muslim right. And so I try to just as an example, Inaash, this it sounds ridiculous, but a YouTube channel of a couple a Lebanese Shia immigrant to Colombia and his convert wife, who in the process of the YouTube, you know, their chapters de- hijabs, right, you know, so she, she unveils right, she's like, this is not something that she wants to do. And I think, though, what thinking with unexpected places allows us to do is say, okay, let's make these connections that are clear. Now, Colombia is the sites that have the largest sight of like, you know, US military intervention in terms of the war on drugs. What does it also mean that there is a collapsing of the narco, you know, trafficker onto the terrorist, right, we see both US expert "experts" air quotes again, right? Again, go to Colombia to testify against Lebanese immigrants, they should they don't think should be naturalized because they are terrorists. But we also see the US they're involved in the legal system as part of again, the tendrils of US empire to prosecute drug traffickers. Right. And I wrote about this kind of recently, but there's the 2017, I think it is. Colombian entry for the Oscars, is actually *Birds of Summer* [*Birds of Passage*] in which the lead character is a Wayuu-Indian drug trafficker who holds the name Abuchaibe, which is the name of one of the most prominent Arab Colombian families in Barranquilla. They are carnival queens there, right. They're, I mean, I don't know if they're trafficking that's that's beyond the purview of my research. Right. But, but this is a really odd conjuncture. Again, I think you have to think about unexpected places that are nonetheless articulating a world. And you can extrapolate from these odd confluences, or unexpected locales. A lot more about how we get a more mainstream discourse is functioning. That seems so idiosyncratic, but it was like, I think it's such a great example of maybe what thinking in unexpected places, and thinking with and against the US state. You know, kind of an idiosyncratic, you know, what kind of a typical archives allows.

1:01:48 Inaash Islam

I'm so sorry that I missed both Atiya's and Thomas's talks, but I can't wait to watch the recording back and hear all the great, you know, things that were said. But in terms of answering Stanley's question, I'm glad that you liked my work. I appreciate it. It's good to feel validated in my work. But in terms of your question, in particular, and how hijabi women are seen as practicing freedom and democracy, I think that there's an inherent danger in reproducing that that idea that wearing the hijab in society or in a liberal democracy is an embodiment of one's choice and one's freedom, but at the same time, take the hijab off itself may also be seen in the same discourse of being in a space

where the hijab itself is a racialized marker and taking it off is an indication of your choice in the matter is again a dangerous narrative to reproduce. And I think that what it reminds me of is Ayaan Hirsi Ali's consistent approach towards Muslims and Islam. And instead of looking at hijabi women who do the hijab or women who take off the hijab, as women who are making their own agentive decisions, despite they're not doing anything necessarily novel, they are working against social forces, no matter whether they're taking on the hijab or taking it off. Again, I don't approach the donning of the hijab or taking off the hijab as something that is novel. I specifically look at it as them just exercising their agency because and a demonstration of the capacity for their agency for being able to make this decision to take to put it on and to take it off. But at the same time, I recognize they're contending with certain kinds of social forces that want them to act in certain ways want them to embody freedom and democracy. But then also want them to embody and body in association with, with piety and with a visible identification with the Muslim community or the cultural community or whatever it may be. So yeah, so that's a roundabout answer to your question. I'm not sure. Yeah, I'm not sure exactly how they're located with this, and within, you know, the liberal democracy, but I am thinking now about the ways in which they complicate these kinds of discourses of, of choice and freedom and the agency itself. So yeah.

1:04:25 Amira Jarmakani

Thank you. Thinking through, look out lots of things running through my head and in relation to all of your responses. But we do have one more question in the Q&A. So I'm going to go ahead and read that out. I think it sort in somewhat brings us full circle back to the first question. So but maybe that's a good good way for us to revisit comes from Muhammad Yousuf. Thinking along the lines of deconstructing what critical Muslim studies means? What are the ethical and political dimensions of the study in critical Muslim studies? In other words, what differentiates critical Muslim studies versus merely critical studies of Muslims? And then thanking all for your incredible talks, great material to engage as a grad student trying to do critical Muslim studies.

1:05:16 Atiya Husain

I think this is a great question. And I have to say that I'm not totally settled on what I think about it, and the various studies fields. Just so recently, at my university, I was part of an effort to help establish an Africana Studies program, after a bunch of Black undergraduate students made demands for an Africana Studies Department. What ended up happening was a program and after fighting for it for much of last year, it finally got approved by the faculty, and it's moving forward and all of that. And one thing that we really had to think about very seriously, was how to make a case for this. Even though my university is in the capital of the Confederacy, and all of that we still had to really think about framing, even though it should have already had this, we still had to

think about framing. And this is not a diversity initiative. This is about knowledge production. This is about epistemology. At this point, it might sound like I don't know any other words, and all I talk about is epistemology. But it was very central to the arguments that we were making, that in Africana studies or Black studies, which is what we meant, kind of synonymously for what we were doing. In that, you know, you still read texts across different fields, you still read Kant, you still read Hegel, you still, you know, engage with this kind of Western canon as we know it, but from a different vantage point from a different perspective. And so the work that I think is really great in critical Muslim studies will do that will engage some of the more familiar works, but from a different angle. And I think that that is a really important dimension of any kind of blank studies field and that when the goal is just to represent the people we get, it gets, it gets tricky, and it is political. So I'm not saying that I'm against that. But I do think that it is something that is worth thinking about that what is the political project with any kind of blank studies thing? And so for critical Muslim studies, you know, like any other field, it can go either way. It's eternally fraught. It has its debates. So that's, that's what I have on that.

1:07:47 Thomas Simsarian Dolan

That's so great. And I'm, yeah, I also the only one I know apparently is tentative, but what what I was gonna say was, I think when I hear studies, it makes me nervous. It's such a great question, you know, but I think I hear studies and it. It seems as if we're moving into institutionalization or professionalization, you know, or the kind of ossification of categories, right. Whereas in my mind, ideally, get knowledge production, right, as a political project and ethical project is always about thinking coalitional and making connections and showing, again, as I said earlier, like worlds that we haven't seen before. I think there is a liberatory aspect that certainly drives whether you want to call it well, humanists has lots of limitations, you know, but I certainly am invested in, in scholarship as an ethical project, right, that leads to even the modest political goal that fewer people live in fear, right. But what I hear studies, I'm like, oh, yikes, what are we losing? By again, erecting these boundaries? And thinking, as we've said, kind of creating differences, right, that might that disconnect us, from other people with whom we actually have common cause and often in my scholarship, common history. So I would say that this that studies must be we said this word to forward thinking and liberatory. You know, what I mean, by by forward thinking is not like, oh, progressive, or liberal or whatever, right. But thinking towards futurity, and being fleet footed about change. Right, yeah. So to get to kind of overcome my initial resistance to studies as kind of institutionalization, I think that studies inherently are about futurity. And I kind of want to I would emphasize, that's, I think what a studies can and should, and must do in order to be an ethical project, is to continue to, to think fleetly, right? And understand, even any theory or a political project, or if we want to talk about theory versus practice, is always grounded in a particular moment, but is constantly evolving. So I think that I

would say studies, I love it, but we have to think about it as being something that moves, as opposed to something that becomes precious, you know, or stable.

1:10:09 Amira Jarmakani

I wanted to leave space, Inaash, and not speak over if you wanted to speak on this as well. But it really actually it made me think the question made and your comments made me think of Stan's question to you. And that framing of the liberal democratic piece. So thinking about like Atiya, you mentioned diversity initiatives, and that this idea of the way that canonization or institutionalization of the things that we're trying to look at can get bought in diverse diversity initiatives. And the same category can, you know, just co-opt, like the kinds of Thomas said, ossify and, you know, co-opt the kinds of like movements like that, where I think your word is actually fleet that was nice. So this idea of like movement, instead of ossification, getting weighed down. And the, and if I guess, like, there's also a feeling sometimes, like, if we can be fleet footed and move and be, like, agile in these kinds of ways, then maybe we can't get captured into these, like, diversity initiatives or other kinds of things that will that just seek to, you know, kind of flatten, or like this idea of like, the liberal democratic narratives that will want to like capture, you know, de jabiing or hijabi women, you know, how, however, it's like, sort of working. And I'm, you know, anyway, I, we could give other examples of the ways that this plays out. But I think we probably all have copious amounts of examples. So I think that was a lovely question to end on, because it sort of did bring us full circle to this question, this idea of like how to keep nimble and keep the keep pushing back on the categories and the ways that those categories want to keep things static or rigid, when really, there's so much more complicated, complex and rich areas for us to continue to have these overlapping dialogues. So thanks, again, to everybody to all the panelists for your wonderful papers as well. I think I took your appearance, [Maura] as a signal that we're nearing the end of time.

1:12:37 Maura Cunningham

Yes, I'm afraid I'm afraid our time has come to an end. But on behalf of the Association for Asian Studies, I would like to thank our panelists today. And Amira Jarmakani for moderating the session as well as of course thank Stan Thangaraj for organizing this mini series on Critical Muslim Studies, our next session in the mini series will be April 16. It's another Friday afternoon. We won't be holding any AAS to do Digital Dialogues during the month of March. And that's because we will be focusing our efforts on our first virtual annual conference. So I hope that our audience members today will join us for that event. It will be March 21 through 26th. There's still plenty of time to register. And thank you again to everyone who spoke today to all of our audience members for attending and for posing some really fantastic questions to our panelists. And I hope

everyone has an enjoyable rest of their day and a wonderful weekend. Thanks so much for participating.

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