

“Eggs” episode (Colour Code by Denise Balkasoon & Hannah Sung)

From the episode’s show notes: “What does white fragility mean to you?” (*The Seattle Times*)

- Robin DiAngelo: white fragility is “the inability to handle challenges to the white position, worldview or perspective.... of ourselves as the norm for humanity.... When it does challenged, it throws us off balance, and we don’t have the skills or the stamina...”

the set up: a CBC/Angus Reid Institute poll (Oct 2016): 68% of Canadians want minorities to do more to “fit in” (contrasting with 53% of Americans)

the debrief between Denise & Hannah: “the sound of a conversation that all racialized people have nightmares about”

the convo itself: a radio conversation between Denise Balkasoon & Ian Power (on Vancouver’s CKNW)

Ian: “Minorities that tend to stick to themselves—insular--- I want to know more about your community, this community.... And I find that I’m not allowed in.... and yet, I want to.... i want to be able to go into these cultures, these minorities, and be part of their culture and have them be part of what I call my culture: the Canadian culture. Am I off? Am I expecting too much? Am I asking the wrong question?”

Denise: “I think most groups of people do that, including white Canadians.... Was there a time when you were turned away? This might just be your perception.”

Ian: “Actually, I have been turned away. Not at the door, per se, but when I am out in the community and there are identifiable groups that are not interested in conversing in the line up at the grocery store... when I go to the community centre, which I do every day, by the way... most are pretty good, but there are some that don’t want anything to do with the broader community. They stay within their own culture.... I think that what Canadians want is more assimilation.”

Denise: “Those Canadians are also Canadians..... if one person doesn’t want to talk to you at the grocery store, maybe they’re having a bad day...”

Ian: “I think you’re misunderstanding what I’m saying. I’m not suggesting that one incident What I’m saying is that I live in a community where I am, as a Caucasian male, a minority. And sometimes I don’t feel that comfortable. But I’m not recognized as a minority..... I live this everyday. So I know what it’s like to be on that side of things.... I know they’re immigrants because they’re very fluent in their mother tongue.... I guess I’m just a racist now.... I plead complete guilt...”

Denise: “There’s a concept called white fragility which is that when white people have to deal with race... they get uncomfortable.”

Ian: “And so what? What does that mean? Does that mean because the colour of my skin doesn’t match yours... maybe I’m from far away.... You really know how to trivialize things, don’t you? ... every person is an individual, let’s agree on that. I’m talking about groups of people who are considered to be minorities.... I’m the minority where I live, but I’m not recognized.... I want them to participate in the politics of the community.”

the post-convo apologies:

- Larry Gifford, the program director of the station, calls to apologize; he had received “feedback” from Denise’s twitter followers.
 - Denise: “these sentiments weren’t shocking to me.... It’s really hard to talk about race. That’s part of the whole point of our podcast.”
- Ian called to apologize himself. But many people tweet support for Ian and antagonism towards Denise. Ian gets fired, as does the producer of the segment.
 - Denise & Hannah: “What is the point of getting into it with that person? what is the point of getting into it with someone like that? what is the point?... can they unlearn what they think they know? I guess the point of interacting with them is making them a better person.”

What are the key objectives of this podcast, do you think? Is it an example of critical theory? How??