

everyday feminism

WORK THROUGH ISSUES. STAND UP FOR YOURSELF. LIVE YOUR TRUTH.

Video Transcription of “I’m A Foreigner?” by Amraj Lally¹

Hey, first of all, people haven’t actually come up to me telling that I’m a foreigner, but they might as well have. This video is a first part of a series about microaggressions.

So, what are they? They’re small, everyday, but negative statements or behaviors about a non-dominant group. They may sometimes not be explicit. They sometimes are unintentional and even unconscious.

This video is about how non-white natives are labelled as eternally foreign and how being simply asked the question “where are you from” makes me uncomfortable. And that’s because of the bizarre retaliation in the eyes of a non-British person can expect.

[Video Clip of [“What kind of Asian are you?”](#) By Ken Tanaka]

Caucasian Man: Where are you from?

Asian Woman: I was born in Orange County.

Caucasian Man: Before that?

Asian Woman: Before I was born.

Caucasian Man: Where are your people from?

Asian Woman: Oh, my great grandma was from Seoul.

Caucasian Man: Korean? Your English is perfect. Kamsashina. I actually really like kimchi.

The definition of the alien in one’s own land are statements or behaviors that assume that non-dominant groups are foreign and this is usually just because they are not white.

And some examples of this, which were also in the video clip, include complementing someone who is non-white for speaking good English, even though this is their native country. I mean this is not an achievement.

Asking a non-white native where they are really from or asking one to tell you what it’s in “their own language.”

All the way up to not preferring or selecting them as a therapist or practitioner because they will not “get” you. All of these were examples of racial microaggressions.

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Actually, getting one to understand these can actually be easy. Sometimes, you flip things the other way around.

Asian Woman: Where are you from?

Caucasian Man: I'm just American.

Asian Woman: You're Native-American?

Caucasian Man: Oh, my grandparents were from England.

Asian Woman: Well, hello governor! I think your people's fish n' chips are amazing.

And that was a comedy clip by Ken Tanaka.

And it really highlights how even when you ask a white Westerner where they're from, they're not really from there either.

Through genealogy studies, we can know that by invasion, colonization and migration that no one race has been completely rooted in one country throughout time. And even if they were, it does not make them more legitimate person to live in that place.

Consequences

Microaggressions may be well-justified. For example, being curious, mean to complement, or even impress someone of a non-dominant group.

But, a focus group from a town in 2009 found recipients of these microaggressions found them disturbing and uncomfortable. Racial microaggressions are harmful because they are delegitimizing and have negative hidden messages within them.

For example, you are a perpetual foreigner in your homeland. You are not truly American, truly British, etc. Non-white natives are second-class citizens.

All these statements aren't true but individuals from non-dominant groups are made to feel this way.

So What Now?

So, it was in our town in the year 2000 said that simply labeling this microaggressive acts as forms of discrimination is one really important step.

Also, if you're Non-White Western Native, you can choose to use hybrid identities. For example: Latin-American, British-Indian, German-Pole or Indian-American. But, this should only be applied if the person wants to label themselves.

Personally, I find it problematic because mixing-up and mashing-up the supposed race, culture affiliation, and country of origin all together in one and the true definition of nationality is actually not racialized at all. But it can be useful to some. So, my critic is not to delegitimize these entities.

“Could You Tell Me your background?”

Those who ask the microaggressive question “Where are you from?” can instead ask “Tell me about your background?”

Secondly, speak up. Don't just say nothing because somehow silence is compliance. I'm not saying to do this all the time because that can be exhausting. And when you decide to say something, do say it in a compassionate way because that is usually more productive.

Another technique is to challenge them. To say where you're born and then say what you mean, “wow he's from before he is born” just as the video did.

Also, be an ally. Those aren't doing the microaggressive act can also have a good role in this and to support individuals who are natives.

And to end all this, I really just want to go back to the roots of prejudice. Maybe it's time to start judging people on their characteristics, their traits rather than labels or categories they fit into.

I mean is that too much to ask for?

If you want to catch the rest of the series of microaggression and other videos, please do subscribe to my [YouTube channel](#). I'm going to do a post camera shows so I get to know the issues you guys care about. You can get to know me, ask advice, etc.

Ciao.