

Hi Andromeda,

Well, apparently I've written another piece you disagree with yet chose to transcribe anyway. I hardly know what to say, as "thank you" seems entirely inadequate.

~~was~~ I don't have a copy of my "Presumption of Whiteness" post in front of me, but of course I recall the gist of it. I doubt you misunderstood it because you strike me as particularly sharp, but if there WAS any misunderstanding, it was probably due to my tendency to ~~be~~ too wordy. I know I can be my own worst enemy when I write, and sometimes I cringe when I re-read things, not for the ideas I've expressed but for my almost comically convoluted way of expressing them.

I titled that essay "The Presumption of Whiteness" for a reason, which is my belief that "whiteness" is a slippery concept; not a color so much as a status that can actually be retracted in some circumstances, just as it can be and often is conferred on people with distinctly dark skin. "Whiteness" can't be JUST a function of skin color, right? Isn't it at least partly about our beliefs about people, about their character, their "quality", their presumed value to society? And ~~of course~~ <sup>yes, of course</sup> skin tone is a common heuristic for these baseless character judgements, but IF "whiteness" is a physical trait and nothing more, then how to explain the considerable expansion over the past two centuries of who gets called "white", along with all the distinctly pale people who did not automatically get the label in early American history? It must be more than a matter of mere melanin. Perhaps our conception of "whiteness", beyond skin alone, is mainly understood (subconsciously?) in contrast to "non-whiteness", e.g. a "darkness of heart or soul", a mysteriousness or inscrutability, a malignity, and of course, good ol' "criminality", however that may be defined in a given place and time.

I wrote that post so that my observations inside prisons might offer a basis for questioning some common assumptions about the nature and consequence of policing. It's possible I'm simply mistaken about ~~what~~ <sup>what</sup> seems to me an essentially egalitarian abusiveness by pigs in prisons, and I'd love to see some comprehensive and accurate statistics on the rates of inmate mistreatment. My guess is that there are none, though, and that we're stuck with anecdotal and subjective experiences like mine from which we must form our opinions. Also, I'd expand the conversation to include other forms of ~~cap abuse~~ <sup>cap abuse</sup> well beyond just physical



violence, since the ways prison piggies hurt their captives is hardly limited to skull-crushing alone, just as with real world cops. Variables like active gang membership should probably be considered as well, since that surely affects who guards mess with in prisons. But even that may be pretty neutral, since prison gangs tend to span the skin-tone rainbow fairly evenly. Incidentally, I do know of a couple prisons where the staff is known for its blatant racism, but those are outliers and in any event, I'm not so sure non-"black" prisoners are treated much better even in those places.

I really am sorry my views on this offended you (or my poor phrasing?). I just genuinely believe that if my personal experiences with a seemingly rough equality of inside abuse by authorities holds water, then it might open a particularly important can of worms for broader social analyses. It might focus attention on the problems of statism, authoritarianism, and dominator culture in general, which I suspect is the primary driver of racism in the first place (well, combined with inherent human tendencies to imagine in-groups & outgroups, dehumanising the latter). Let's flush out the truth! I'm certainly game, open to any new information, and excited about the possibilities. Love to see how new paradigms play out, and also love to have my own biases ~~put~~ put to real tests by valid data.

Take care.

Sincerely,

Dymal