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So, at risk of wading into difficult territory, some thoughts on the American 'separate but equal' discourse in the context of segregation, and why it is not the same as claiming there are salient differences between men and women.

1. Ethnicity is to race as sex is to gender.

That is, there are some physiological differences between different ethnic groups. Race is the structure of social meaning given to and codifying those differences into a hierarchy, and it has analogies to the structure of gender, in

that is is created by the dominant group (white people), in the interest of maintaining their power (and material exploitation) of the people positioned as the inferior term in the hierarchy.

2. While racial and gender hierarchies have similar and intertwined conceptual structures, ethnic differences are *not* like sex differences.

Ethnic differences are the result of physical adaptations to particular historical environments, and they are not salient to our social

organisation. We should not organise our social structures, or access to any goods or resources, by ethnicity. [There are exceptions to this regarding social organisation aimed at redressing injustices created by race, and political and/or cultural organisation which aims to

centre the needs/history/culture of particular racialised groups]

The basic point however, is that ethnic differences are not salient to our social organisation in the way that sex differences are, because the reproductive difference between males and females is a discrete

difference in kind which creates specific material needs and interests which are not in any way analogous to ethnic differences. [This is not unrelated to the fact that ethnicity is indeed much more spectrum-like than sex, allows for multiple forms of mixture and variation, and

that the boundaries of 'race' imposed upon it are very culturally and historically specific].

3. Therefore, when 'separate but equal' discourse was used in the context of

maintaining racist social organisation, any appeal to underlying ethnic differences to justify racial

exclusion was bogus.

By contrast, when women claim that their material specificity means that they need sex-based rights, they are appealing to a different underlying material reality, in which sex is a discrete difference in kind with regard to reproduction, and in which there

are also other salient differences which derive from secondary sexualisation.

4. Lastly, as the previous point makes evident, 'separate but equal' claims in the context of racial segregation were made *by the dominant class* in the interests of maintaining a power structure

which advantages them. Difference feminist claims (which pre-exist the trans debate by many decades, and were not plucked out of thin air so we could be evil), are made by the subjugated class, and are directed at the way the dominant class' failure to attend to, respect,

and accommodate the material specificity of women leads to unjust outcomes for women.

The 'cis/trans' binary functions here to obscure the fact that what is happening is female people claiming the specificity of their needs within a male dominated culture.

The cis/trans binary, that is, functions to flip the axis of oppression, and position female people as the oppressor class. This is what allows the analogy with segregationist rhetoric to fly. (It also disseminates the idea that women are not oppressed qua women)

From the perspective of sex class analysis, this is an epic distortion. Viz, women are not the white people in the analogy.

(This is not to say white women are not racist. But the fact they are racist does not mean that female people oppress male people along the axis of sex.)

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