

Cultural Appropriation: The Theft of Marriage

By: Luke LaRocque
Staff Writer

Cultural appropriation is the seizing of a culture's physical or intellectual elements by another culture for the convenience of the dominant culture. Dominant groups commit cultural appropriation not necessarily out of hostility but more often out of ignorance. Groups cannot respect a practice without an understanding of it.

Desecrating a culture's holy practice for instance, is more severe than mimicking their cuisine. Giving a culture its proper respect becomes challenging as groups with incompatible perspectives claim the same elements.

Consider the practice of Yoga. Today, yoga is a common form of exercise. This is, however, not the origin or the purpose of Yoga. Yoga positions are for the worship of Hindu gods and to enable life energy to flow through the body. Many health communities are guilty of culture appropriation as they have stolen these practices for their own purposes and belittled their meaning.

Like Yoga, the practice of marriage is a cultural element claimed by groups of incompatible perspectives. Traditionally, America has viewed marriage as a union between one man and one woman. Popular thought now claims that marriage includes unions between gay and lesbian couples.

This is not a matter of whether same-sex couples should be permitted



Debating that the term marriage should be reserved for a man and woman.

to enter domestic partnerships and enjoy legal privileges equal to those of married couples, but rather a disagreement over the word 'marriage.'

Beginning in 2007, my home state of Washington passed laws recognizing and protecting homosexual couples.

By 2012, domestic partnerships were nearly identical to married couples under the law. The crucial difference being same-sex couples were not described with the word 'marriage.' In June 2012, Referendum 74 was put forward to allow same-sex couples to marry and to convert existing domestic partnerships to marriages. In 2012, it was already publicly understood that gay and lesbian couples were successful in their

pursuit of equal rights in Washington.

Before R74, same-sex couples could operate just like any married couple, having access to everything from insurance to adoption. Supporting R74 was not a vote for same-sex rights but a vote for the redefinition of 'marriage.'

Redefining the word marriage is, however, an act of cultural appropriation. Marriage is strictly the union between a man and a woman. The history of marriage is closely tied to religion and in many religions considered a sacred union.

Beyond the religious aspects, marriage is significant to culture. Marriage between a man and a woman is the cornerstone of the family unit.

The traditional family unit includes a monogamous relationship between a man a woman who bear children for the continuation of the species. This union is not naturally occurring but a product of our advancing culture.

According to Christopher Ryan, Ph.D., humans are not monogamous, and even those humans who are with only one partner at a time practice serial polygamy throughout the course of their lives.

Pepper Schwartz, Ph.D., a professor of Sociology at University of Washington expresses a similar sentiment, "I don't think we are a monogamous animal, a really monogamous animal is a goose – which never mates again even if its mate is killed."

While monogamous marriage is not a naturally occurring union, it is indisputable that marriage is beneficial to our society.

The article "The Puzzle of Monogamous Marriage," states that the "norms and institutions that compose the modern package of monogamous marriage have been favored by cultural evolution because of their group-beneficial effects."

Monogamous marriage is not just an element of religious culture but an element of evolved society.

For groups to seize and redefine the word 'marriage' to include homosexual couples is a grave form of cultural appropriation that desecrates the religious union and disrespectfully disregards the cultural evolution that made it the norm.

Not Cultural Appropriation: Marriage Can Be Used For All

By: Chelsea Tucker
Guest Writer

I have been in a long-distance relationship with my girlfriend for almost two and a half years now, and we were best friends for two years before that.

She is incredible, and beautiful, and I have known for a long time that I want to spend the rest of my life with her.

Still, I could not bring myself to tell my parents about our relationship until a few months ago, because I am a woman too.

I did not want to tell them because I was afraid they wouldn't support me anymore. I thought they would be angry, or that they would never accept who I am.

But telling my parents meant I did not have to lie for another day.

I was fed up with keeping this part of my life from them, and my relationship had grown into something I could no longer hide. Something I didn't want to hide.

I told them because I want to marry my girlfriend. Yes, marry. I want to have a marriage.

Not yet, but once I graduate from Mines. Not a gay marriage, just a marriage.

Not a civil union, a marriage.

The idea of marrying for love is

actually pretty recent, since it used to be mostly for forming alliances and extending power. But in our country today, love is supposed to be the reason we marry.

The idea of marriage changes as society changes, and we now believe it is to be respected. We believe its purpose is to create a profound union between two people.

The Supreme Court decision on gay marriage states "It would misunderstand these men and women to say they disrespect the idea of marriage. Their plea is that they do respect it, respect it so deeply that they seek to find its fulfillment for themselves."

And so we must understand that marriage is not solely a religious institution anymore. The government does not base its decisions off of religion; a marriage is a union recognized under the law. But a civil union is recognized under the law too, so, why is that not enough?

First, let me ask you this: Should the union of two atheists be treated differently than the union of two Christians? Should it have a special name? Should a person entering their third marriage have less rights than a person entering their first?

Second, let me tell you that you do not have the same rights or



Defending all marriages, despite sexual orientation.

benefits in a civil union as you do in a marriage. If you want me to enter into a civil union, I better have equal rights under the law.

And if I have equal rights under the law, then the only difference between a marriage and a civil union is the name.

So yeah, I am going to get married to the person I love. I am going to get tax benefits and I am going to have joint custody over children with my spouse and I am going to

have an easier time buying a house.

I am going to have a wedding, and I am going to wear a beautiful dress.

I am going to be happy, and I am not going to worry about other people's decisions if they do not affect me.

I hope anyone who disagrees with me can do the same.