

So, what is wrong with gay marriage?

In order to answer that question we must first understand what this thing called marriage is. Marriage is essentially a financial and legal contract that allocates the movement of property, power and privilege from one person to another. Historically it has been a way of consolidating family power amongst and between men, through women. In more recent times marriage in the United States has functioned to solidify the American middle class. Marriage does this through concentrating wealth and power through family lines and inheritance (both in terms of money and power). Because of marriage's ability to discipline class structures it is now, and always has been a primary structure of a capitalist economy. In reality most people marry within their own socioeconomic class. Marriage, earlier through miscegenation laws, and currently through racist "values" also contains wealth through racist ideologies of matrimony. Because of these realities there has been a long history of critique of the institution of marriage launched by feminists of color, white feminists, and queer people among others.

What about gay marriage? Isn't gay marriage going to change all of this?

NO. The current push towards gay marriage is, in fact, not going to subvert the systems of domination we all live through. Ironically, the gay marriage movement is standing on these same legacies of brutality for their slice of the wedding cake. Take for example the "Freedom to Marry" stickers created by the freedom to marry organization. Not only are these stickers falsely equating the intervention of the State into ones life (marriage) with "freedom" (when was the last time the State helped you to become more "free"?) they are trying to work this idea through horrifying star-spangled stickers. Instead of critiquing the ways US imperialism has rendered most transgender people, queer people, people of color etc. as expendable through its countless wars here and abroad, the Freedom To Marry stickers simply disguise these histories and reproduce this red-white-and-blue national theme for every married gay and guilt filled liberal to wear with PRIDE.

If straight people can marry, why should gay people not have the same privilege?

What we are calling for is an abolishment of State sanctioned coupling in either the hetero or homo incarnation. We are against any institution that perpetuates the further exploitation of some people for the benefit of others. Why do the fundamental necessities marriage may provide for some (like healthcare) have to be wedded to the State sanctioned ritual of terror known as marriage?

Won't gay marriage help couples stay together where one person is not a US citizen?

The way immigration is being used by the gay marriage movement is not only unthought-out but also relies on racist notions of the "white man saving his brown lover". Although it is true that because of the US policies on immigration some lesbian and gay couples may be split, gay marriage does not at all question these systems that allow some people into the country(white) while excluding others (people of color). Where are the gay marriage "activists" when the INS is actively raiding and deporting whole families?(such as it is currently doing just blocks away from the Castro in San Francisco's

Mission District). Also missing from the picture of immigration that gay marriage advocates are painting is the reality that there are queer couples in the US where neither person is a US citizen. How will gay marriage help them stay in the US if that is what they want to do? Gay marriage will not challenge "citizenship" but simply place some bodies within its grasp while holding others out.

I agree with your argument, but isn't gay marriage a step in the right direction?

This liberal model of "progression" is one of the primary ways many of us are ideologically trapped into a reformist way of thinking. To understand how gay marriage, like voting, will never lead to liberation we can look to the histories of many "social justice movements" that only address oppressions on a level of the symptomatic. Gay marriage and voting are symbolic gestures that reinforce structures while claiming to reconfigure them. This scheme will undoubtedly become apparent with "marriage equality" advocates. As they have positioned gay marriage as the last great civil rights battle, will they continue to fight after the Honeymoon?

Won't gay marriage help get health care to more people?

It may help some people get healthcare but for the vast majority of Americans with NO healthcare it will do nothing. And within the rhetoric of the gay marriage movement working towards healthcare for all (people and animals) is nowhere to be found. This argument also relies on the false assumption that one person would already have healthcare.

So if you are against gay marriage then you are allying with the Christian Right and the GOP!

NO. This is amongst the most troubling aspect of this current epidemic of gay marriage. The way the marriage movement is framing any critique of their precious institution is either you are one of us (gay married) or you are one of them (homophobe). This helps to silence the much needed debate and public discourse around such issues. It seems as if everyone has been shamed into submission and subsequent silence by the marriage movement. Even in allegedly "progressive" circles any mention of the implicit links between marriage, misogyny, and racism in the U.S. gets shutdown by a "gay married". Ironically, if you look at the rhetoric of the freedom to marry movement and the Republican Party their similarities are frighteningly apparent. In their ideal world we would all be monogamously coupled, instead of rethinking the practice of "coupling". They want us working our jobs not working towards collective and self-determination, remembering anniversaries not the murder of trans-people, buying wedding rings not smashing capitalism. The vision of the future the republicans and the gay marriage movement has offered will render most of us already in the margins of the picture (trans-people, sex workers, queers of color, HIV positive people, non-monogamous people etc) as the new enemy of the régime of married normalcy they hope to usher in.

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