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# Cultural appropriation

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If you're a man and have attended a wedding or funeral recently and worn a suit of some kind, most likely you wore a necktie with that suit.

Many businessmen wear a tie on a regular basis to achieve a desired image. After all, do you really want to meet with a lawyer to discuss a real estate transaction, only to find the guy you are paying big bucks to is wearing a tie-dye T-shirt with a picture of Kurt Cobain and Nirvana tour dates from 1991?

If you wear a necktie, you are guilty of cultural appropriation, because the original necktie was worn by Croatian mercenaries in the 17th century and was ?borrowed' by other cultures.

While the term ?cultural appropriation' has actually been around for a long time, it is in the last few years that some groups have started shaming people for wearing clothing or having a style borrowed from another culture.

A video came across my news feed of a young woman in British Columbia who was trying to enter a LGBTQ festival, but was stopped at the gate and refused entry.

Her hairstyle was ?inappropriate,' the gatekeepers said, because they were dreadlocks. The gatekeeper brought out a list of ?rules' for the event, and cultural appropriation would not be tolerated.

It was an unfortunate incident for several reasons. The woman was quite upset. She had already paid for her ticket and had driven a considerable distance to be at the event.

She couldn't understand why she was being shamed for her hairstyle.

Her hairstyle didn't appear to be dreadlocks. I thought it looked more like one long braid that came over her shoulder. I thought she looked fine.

But here's the thing. The two gatekeepers denying her entry to the event had tattoos. In fact, one had a full sleeve on their arm.

Tattoos are not a Western thing. They were borrowed from other cultures, and now have become somewhat mainstream in Western society.

The woman who was denying a person entry to an event for cultural appropriation had a permanent record of cultural appropriation proudly displayed on her body, and yet was oblivious to the fact that she was shaming a young woman while being a walking billboard for the very thing she was offended by.

Cultures have always borrowed styles, practices, and cultural things from other societies.

Why would you be offended by that? Isn't imitation the sincerest form of flattery?

If borrowing from other cultures is offensive and should be stopped, there's going to be a lot of changes in society.

I was at a parade recently that featured several pipe and drum bands wearing tartans. Not one of the pipers was Scottish. Shouldn't kilts be worn, and pipes played only in the cultural region they come from?

Italian cuisine uses a lot of tomato sauce. Many Italians I know spend considerable time and effort making sauce, and take great pride in their homemade flavour.

However, tomatoes are not an Italian thing. They are native to South America and only started being used in Italian cooking in the early 18th century.

It seems the Italians have culturally stolen South American cuisine.

The modern business suit was developed in Western Europe and has evolved over time. If you travel to Asia, businessmen all wear the standard suit and tie. Isn't that a rip-off of European culture?

Every army and navy in the world uses a form of salute as a sign of respect. They all use a similar gesture with the hand and arm.

The military salute started in Rome as a way of a friendly greeting and to indicate that you are unarmed.

Every military in the world has culturally appropriated this salute. I don't know of any military where a form of a salute is done by winking or dancing a jig.

Should Indigenous people in the far north stop using snowmobiles and rifles because they were invented by other cultures, and go back to using dog sleds, bows and arrows?

Have you ever been in a Taco Bell restaurant that was actually staffed by Mexicans?

People will always borrow fashions and ideas from other cultures.

The baseball cap is an American thing, but now they are worn worldwide.

Shaming someone for wearing clothing or a hairstyle just isn't the right thing to do, especially when your tattoos paint a picture of the very thing you are trying to stop.