

A Short Guide to Cultural Appropriation

Cultural appropriation is an aspect of human exchange that refers to the taking of someone else's culture (expressions, dress, intellectual property, artifacts, knowledge, art forms, etc.) without "permission." Cultural appropriation is very tricky to navigate as there are fine lines between attributing "ownership," showing one's appreciation for, and mocking or parodying another culture. The stakes are also heightened when aspects of culture are taken from minority groups or groups that have traditionally been oppressed or marginalized, and, as a result, those who take, borrow, or 'exploit' those aspects of culture benefit from them in terms of capital, power, prestige, and popularity (e.g. Miley Cyrus's "twerking"). This benefit often occurs at the expense of the very group from which aspects of culture were appropriated.

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