

TRANSADVOCATE

The Irish Essay

By Marti Abernathey

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Abstract

By Caillean McMahon A few thoughts on the issue of gay marriage: First of all, nearly all of us support the idea that same sex couples ought to have the right, or have the right to marry even if the laws of a nation deny that right. That said, I've a few observations: In re: [...]

Article

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A few thoughts on the issue of gay marriage:

First of all, nearly all of us support the idea that same sex couples ought to have the right, or have the right to marry even if the laws of a nation deny that right. That said, I've a few observations:

In re: the argument about the term "wife"

Yes, the feminist tradition that is the bedrock of modern Lesbian activism always had a knee jerk and visceral reaction to the property connotations of the word, to the subservience and powerlessness that it implied. Without going into how Judeo-Christian philosophy and other patriarchal structures took the word and attached those meanings, consider this:

Though once a term that had "second class" woven around the edges, it is now, when used by Lesbians, a term of protest. Every Lesbian that discusses her wife publically is in effect standing in front of the Stonewall Inn again, saying to a straight and patriarchal world that we have taken the word wife and made it our own, we have re-defined it, we have torn away the border of subservience that men wove into the tapestry. "I have and I am a wife" is a powerful and moving declaration of Lesbian independence. We, with that statement, deny the power of anyone to deny us equality. We have embraced the word wife, we have purified it, we have made it something spiritual and emotional far beyond what it had been. Lesbians deny the conservatives their control of relationships, of society, of language in exactly the fashion that the French feminist and rhetorician Iragaray urges to do.

In the same moment, our claiming the right to marry, the right to redefine relationships, similarly gives us the right to choose NOT to embrace it. We can get married and we can decide not to exercise the right. Living through the experience of our relationships not being accepted or recognized by the straight world, we have the responsibility, born out of our own struggle and experience, to honour and to cherish the relationships of those of our sisters who do not participate in marriage, who have their own desires as far as sexuality and emotional connectedness and honestly and authentically live them.

In a world that is a beautiful patchwork quilt of differences we cannot not imitate the "cookie cutter"

expectations of those who once denied us equality by subtly making those who do not “walk down the aisle” and have no desire to do so something less than, someone incomplete.

We are, in the end, suffused with richness of spirit and wisdom as a group because of our differences. We are only united by two words, woman and Lesbian. If we lose sight of the validity of our varied natures we lose the treasure that that gives to us.

You don't want to marry--way cool hon. You know what makes you happy, what is right for you and as your sister I think that it is the wisdom and blessing of the Goddess and cherish that aspect of you and the power that your beliefs and understanding bring to the Lesbian community.

For those who wish to and who have married, -way cool as well. You know what is right for you and again, as your sister I cherish that aspect of each of you and the power that your beliefs and understanding to the Lesbian community...

Some of us are married, some single, some are monogamous, some poly-all Lesbians. The Lesbian world is powerful and wise only as long as that diversity continues and we respect, cherish and nurture that panoply of lives.

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