

Is America Slouching Toward Legalized Polygamy and Incest?

After the recent legalization of same-sex unions, the internet was in a flurry with the logical consequences of the decision. If the basis of the decision was about adult consent and autonomy, what about polygamy? Chief Justice John G. Roberts said it best in his dissent in *Obergefell*: "Although the majority randomly inserts the adjective 'two' in various places, it offers no reason at all why the two-person element of the core definition of marriage may be preserved while the man-woman element may not," Roberts wrote. "Indeed, from the standpoint of history and tradition, a leap from opposite-sex marriage to same-sex marriage is much greater than one from a two-person union to plural unions, which have deep roots in some cultures around the world." If marriage is not between one man and one woman, why should it be between two people? Jonathan Turley, the lawyer who won the polygamy marriage case in Utah for Kody Brown and his four "Sister Wives" said "much of the language of the majority clearly resonates with our arguments against the criminalization of private consensual relations. It also speaks to the stigma that is borne by families in being excluded in society. That is an even greater danger when your entire family is declared a criminal enterprise merely because the parents chose to cohabitate as a plural family." While polygamy is as "taboo" today as same-sex marriage was in decades past, the legal reasoning for opposing polygamy now has no foundation, says Fredrik deBoer, writing for *Politico*. With the Supreme Court decision, same-sex union advocates have succeeded in undoing natural marriage, he says. Now there is no reason for "progressive people" to oppose extending marriage rights to any and all sexual romantic relationships that adults choose.

Let's fast-forward to another taboo topic (and with good reason): incest. Some argue that incest should be allowed because of the same arguments for autonomy, self-fulfillment and consent that we find in the arguments for same-sex unions and even for polygamy. Debra Lieberman, assistant professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara said, "We need to start asking if it's OK to limit someone's freedom just because we have a 'yuck' response to it." The author of this article seeks to normalize incest saying,

"When Melissa, an administrative assistant in a law firm who's in her 20s, met an older woman named Lisa a few years ago, it was love at first sight. The two have been in a relationship ever since but know that marriage is out of the picture. And it's not because they are lesbian. It's because they are mother and daughter..."

It wasn't that long ago when homosexuality and sadomasochism were also considered taboo. These days, though, Hollywood's offerings are packed with homoerotic imagery and commuters are happy to crack open a copy of Fifty Shades of Grey on the morning train to the office. So if pop culture is anything to go by (and when isn't it?), there are some signs that romantic love between family members is slowly becoming less socially outrageous. Look no further than HBO's Game of Thrones— which explicitly portrays sex between a brother and sister – or scenes of a mother and son going at it in Boardwalk Empire."

Normalizing incest would be to irresponsibly promote its painful, horrible consequences—all in the name of autonomy.

This would lead to health and psychological consequences which are clearly not in the best interest of those participating in it or of any children involved. Even if the two relatives are consenting adults who perceive their lifestyle choice as normal, should it have a stamp of approval

and if not, on what basis do we draw the line if “love is love?” We see how the cookie crumbles. So if marriage is no longer legally between one man and one woman, then on what basis do we draw the line against any kind of consensual “marriage” relationship? What about the “rights” of polygamists or polyamorists like those described in “One Big Happy Polyamorous Family?” And what about the “rights” of those in incestuous relationships? We have a moral obligation to severely and urgently draw the line.