Is Cultural Property Justified?

Presented by:
Dianne Lalonde

Cultural property is often used in claims of cultural appropriation and repatriation, but how can we justify cultural property? Most justifications of property treat it as fungible in the sense that it is easily exchangeable or replaceable, and they present property as something that is permanently gained. However, such a conception of property does not seem to be amenable to the symbolic and representational nature of cultural property. In this presentation, I propose that a more promising justification for cultural property comes from Margaret Radin’s work on personal property. Personal property, Radin argues, is tied to self-development and its loss causes harm. Radin does not, however, include cultural property in her definition and descriptions of personal property. Through the use of an analogy, I argue that Radin’s argument for personal property can be extended to cultural property.

DIANNE LALONDE is a PhD Candidate (ABD) in Political Science at Western University. Her work focuses on contemporary political theory and social justice. In her dissertation, she investigates the issue of cultural appropriation, and associated concepts of culture and cultural property, through a political theory lens. Her work is situated in a broader dialogue about multiculturalism and the politics of recognition. Personal website: www.diannelalonde.com

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2019
12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

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