

**Gullmedalje NM filosofi for vgs 2019/20, 2. runde 5.5.20;
Ingrid-Andrea Gabrielsen, Kongsbakken vgs (Tromsø)**

The Search For The Missing Pieces

«I have argued that philosophy doesn't begin in wonder or in the fact that things are, it begins in a realization that things are not what they might be. It begins with a sense of a lack, of something missing, and that provokes a series of questions.»

LGBT-people, and members of any marginalized group for that matter, know the feeling of lacking something all too well. We have woken up empty every day of our lives, our bones aching with longing for answers to questions we have not yet managed to ask. I believe there to be a strong connection between my love for philosophy and my familiarity with looking for what I find to be missing. In this way, could asking questions about myself be viewed as a gateway drug for asking bigger, bolder questions about the world than I might have asked had I found myself to be a completed puzzle?

Growing up in a culture that endorses tolerance but not necessarily understanding leaves many people who do not fit the "norm" feeling as if something may be wrong with them. It is hard to understand oneself when one does not relate to people around you and is therefore not educated on matters of personal concern. This can lead to many possible outcomes, one may grow to think there is something wrong with oneself or one may simply be left feeling hollow, as though someone forgot to put icing in between the different layers of cake and now it is too dry to enjoy.

It is this feeling of being empty or wrong that intrigues me at this moment. For I am of the belief that one does not question what is believed to be right or whole. Therefore I also believe that people fitting the standards and norms of modern society do not have the same need to investigate their own head and soul in the same way I have found myself investigating my own. These questions I, and so many others like me have asked ourselves often seem to have no answer. Many of them revolve around what might have been had the world been different, or who we might have become had we been born like "the others". The difference here lies in whether we blame the world or ourselves for our discomfort within ourselves.

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Those who blame themselves and look inward for a problem are more likely to grow to hate themselves. This is not incurable but for many it goes practically unnoticed as shame and disgust keep these people from seeking help. However, in this moment I am most interested in the other group, those who blame their missing pieces on the cultural thieves. For these people convert their interest in their own missing pieces into questions about what might be missing in and around others. It is with these people in mind I say that missing something opens your eyes to what may be missing elsewhere.

Those who wonder what may be wrong with them and base their beliefs in what they have and what they are rarely amount to great thinkers. In many ways, they get stuck in themselves and their self-diagnosis. The outward-lookers on the other hand may find themselves with questions they did not know they needed to ask. They may question the system they exist in or they may oppose norms and rules enforced on them.

Great thinkers often have a good reason to think, one does not simply question the culture one exists in out of boredom. You find there to be something missing, something that does not quite add up, and once you do this, you start asking questions. Therefore, LGBT-people and other marginalized groups are often faced with a crossroads: either you grow to blame yourself for your discomfort or you look outward, asking big questions with the risk of someone out there branding you a philosopher.