



Transcript Episode 5

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Frigga [00:10]

Welcome to the Wyrd Thing podcast. I'm Frigga Asraf, your foggy-brained host of today. But I'm in good company of today's co-hosts, Jens and Suzanne. My first challenge of this episode is to pronounce the subject properly, because we are going to talk about L B G T Q I A Plus. And talking about inclusivity, did anybody give any thought on dyslexic people with this interesting range of letters, which have a lot of stories behind them?

Yesterday, I celebrated a harvest blot with my blot group; and finally at least with three of us we could come together and the fourth was online, and we had a chat on being inclusive. And all four of us are white-privileged cisgender hetero. And some of the things we talked about, we looked back how it was when we were young, and yeah, I realised that, all of us realised we knew some gay and lesbian people, and we talked back then about trans... dress? Trans - how to pronounce that in English - men who dress like women?

Suzanne [02:01]

Oh, cross-dressers? Or transgender?

Frigga [02:04]

Yeah, so I knew some gay people and when I got it home found out the lady was getting together with another woman, and I never gave it any thought. It was just the way it was, but I also realised that we never talked about it. We never asked how it was for them, or gave any thought to how it was to grow up, and finding out that you are gay or lesbian or whatever it is. And things I'm now thinking of is how is it if you grow up in surrounding in family, in a society, where if things are said, people say things like "I accept homosexuality", or "I tolerate gays and lesbians". And then I become quiet because that is not I guess a fun way; and then getting back to the present and our talks - even more I realise we have to talk **with** people and not **about** people. So I would like the two of you, teach me: tell me, please, what I need to become more aware of, that I can be in my personal life, but also on Heathen events or during blots, to make people feel included, to make people feel welcome; and what I understand more and more is how to make an environment where people can feel safe.

Jens [03:53]

Yeah, I would like to go one step back and then get forward to that again; we will speak about that. But you said about LGBTIQ+. The letters vary actually, to make it even worse for dyslexic people there is not the one set. But just yesterday I found the Q-double for Queer and Questioning; and other people just add the Plus on the end to say, "Yeah, there could be more". And the one question for me is, is that really one group of people? Because they're so totally different if you look at each of them. You have asexual people and transgender people and like me cis homosexual people... Is that one big group or is it just, are they just all put together? Of course the answer is both, in a way, but the one thing which is in common that we're all in some way are out of the society's mainstream, which is you're heterosexual and you're comfortable with the sex you have been assigned to at birth. And in at least one aspect we differ from that and that is a common



experience in a way. Not when it comes to the actual sexual things there, that can be very diverse, but just this experience of being different to mainstream society in one not-always-obvious way. That's the one big frame around that, and that's why for some discussions it really is one group, and it doesn't matter that much. There is a tradition how we put these letters together and it developed in a way, but don't be bothered if you mix them up because the meaning is still the same.

Frigga [05:44]

Thank you, that's a relief!

Suzanne [05:47]

And we can be known as 'Alphabet People' here in the UK because of all the letters and the very different, many different variations where you say LGBT or LGBT+ or QUILTBAG or LGBTQQIAA... So we tend to be known as the Alphabet People. Because we have many identities that are not what society considers its 'normal', its baseline, so we can be, we can come together into a group so that our collective voices are louder when we're trying to express how we're experiencing discrimination, or that we have experienced individual or systemic discrimination, and that can be a very powerful shared experience: that you can walk into a room and know that people will not discriminate against you is a very powerful thing.

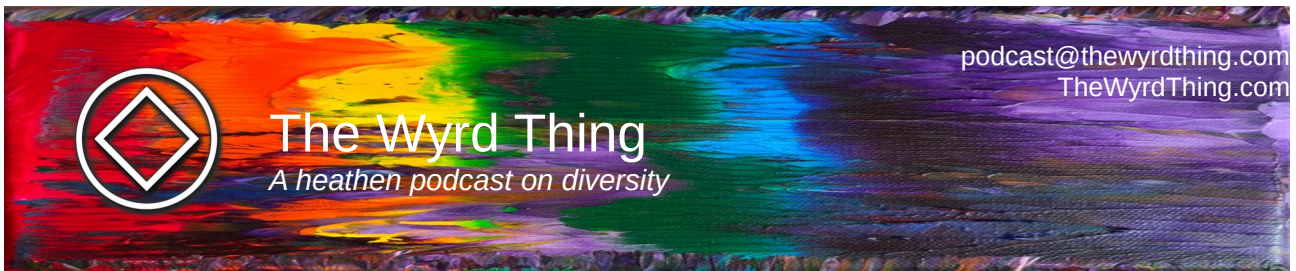
Jens [06:58]

I didn't tell everybody I met at the first place, "Oh and by the way I'm gay". Also at my workplace there were a few people who knew, and I'd never bothered to tell the other ones. And north German people seem to gossip much less than I would've thought before. So I had some interesting experiences before, when I had thought that I had been completely out in this company, or at least the local branch was just ten people, where some people asked me and I told them, and other colleagues were sitting around, and then half a year later, before Christmas, our sales manager said, "Oh yeah and have a nice Christmas and yeah you don't have a wife and family yet, but this will happen." I thought, "What is going on here?! I really thought you knew since half a year!"

So I'm quite used to that, that some people just have no clue that I'm gay. It gets less since I married; but I'm used to that general situation, and I joined my local group, I told... I picked a few individuals there whom I told very early and it was absolutely no issue for them. They didn't even want to speak about it very much, they were totally relaxed, but it seemed yeah, this is not a topic at all.

And then I came to the big first convention. And you have the official statement, "We are inclusive," "We are gay-friendly", whatever, well otherwise I would never have been there, so that's a bit of the first entry you need to have such people like me there.

So I was there. I was still trying to learn of Heathenry really as my thing or not - does this really fit or not, does this fit in this big group? I was learning a lot about Heathenry - I wanted to know, with which people am I? And then you have this big official statement, but you just never talk about it. There was zero LGBTIQ+ visibility on this big convention - at least not for me. I couldn't detect any. People never talked about it, is almost true, but usually we didn't talk about it. It was all very nice and fluffy and people are friendly in general, it felt good to be there, but we just didn't talk about it. The one actual issue is, I'm just getting to know these people, I'm not sure if I really feel connected to this group, if I want to stay long-term. If I come out in this situation I'm the natural token gay. I don't want to be put on that pedestal: I keep a low profile here. This is the one thing. The next thing



which happens is people assume me to be straight. So there was this other interesting anecdote, I had come out to a few people in my group, and then we had our monthly pub moot and were in the end just left with three people there, one of them the co-organiser of a big event, and I asked him, could you tell me more about this? Should I really go there? Would this be good for me? And he started talking, he suddenly said, "Oh yeah, and maybe you just meet a nice girl and spend the rest of the week with her"; and I thought "Okay, I have come out to a few people here and I can't really leave this in the room", so I said to him, "Oh, yeah, you know, I'm actually not really interested in girls." His next response was, "Oh, you're married? You never told us that, Jens!" [laughs] So I had really to smash it into his face; and it was fun and friendly and we can laugh about it, but he assumed me to be straight and just proceeded on there and these things pile up. So at first I'm just cautious, looking, checking out this group, and with situations like this where people assume me to be straight and I'm, at that moment, don't want to set the record right. It also piles up things I would need to clear out later, so I retreat back into my snail-house in a way.

And the other thing which actually happens is, I'm kind of in the closet in the group, but that means that I have my ear pressed very closely to the door and listen for signals if it's safe to open the door or not. And there are very very few signals at all, but the few signals which are there are not always encouraging. If people think, oh, this is an all-straight environment, of course we're all heterosexual, you do have the occasional moment when people just use gay or the equivalent in German or whatever as a slur, just speak not really bad about them but in a slightly negative way, and I think it's hard to imagine for these people how extremely sensitive a person like me is for that in such a moment.

When I have my antennae wide out and my ears very open, can I get any signals, is it really safe to come out or not, and the few signals I get are more this "Oh yeah, look at these funny gay people there, they're, the men are all very effeminate and they're quite nice people but you can't take them totally serious", and things like that. So it's different if you have any LGBTIQ+ visibility, but my experience is that this actually was very often zero.

Another thing there is, you see, or I have seen in Heathen communities, incredible lot of gender stereotypes, and it's perfectly okay if people like their gender roles and embrace them, but if that's the only thing you see, it also sends out a relatively strong signal, "Yeah that's how we think things should be."

And also, if you try to imagine yourself what we all probably have never experienced that way, in a very homophobic racist group how their meetings will look like, they don't talk about it too probably. As long as the topic is not brought up and not challenged, I'm completely in the dark what is the actual stance of the people. I had this official statement: our government says we are gay-friendly here. Yeah, great. That's kind of reassuring; that's way better than if it would be the other way around. But it's not enough to say, "Oh, by the way actually I am gay," especially if I am new to the group and especially if I'm new to the group and new to Heathenry, and want to learn do I really belong here, does this really feel right for me; I'm not crashing in there and say, "Oh, here I am, accept me as I am or don't." No, I want to learn what is this group. Is it worth the struggle? Is it safe? And it's surprisingly difficult to come out then after we had this first idea, "Oh of course, we're all inclusive and we love each other all very much."

Frigga [15:13]

Yeah, and that "We love each other all very much" I never believed in. There always will be people you don't like! People you like, and people you get along with and don't get along with. But yeah, when you tell all this I realise that I also still my bias is most likely men and women because that is the way I was brought up. And a part of me says it shouldn't be needed that it is visible or people



tell, because I normally don't tell, "Hey, guys, I'm hetero", it's just... and I think it should be the way for other people, but it is still needed. Yeah, I think I still respond when I see a person, my brain is just "Oh he is male" or "she is female". That's still the way I think, and if I don't have signals then it's difficult, so that's why I think that talking about it is important. Suzanne, how do you feel about it?

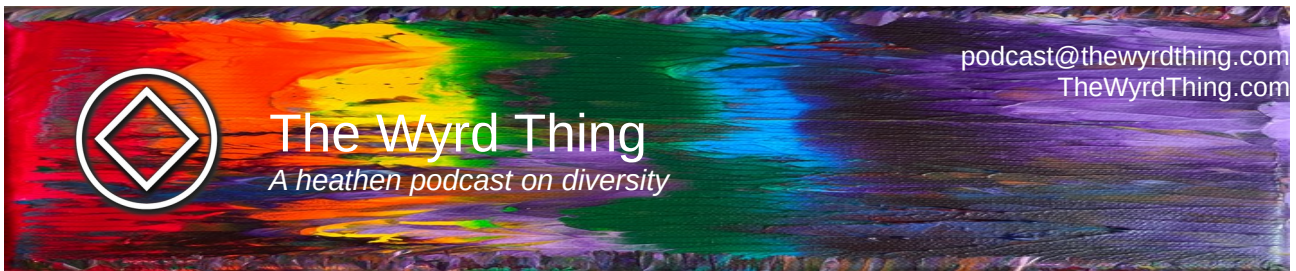
Suzanne [16:38]

I think Jens raised a couple of really interesting points, that organisations, that groups, that events can put a statement out to say yes we are inclusive and yes we accept everybody, especially if it's a really big event; but then it's the actual, the attitude of the people who go, and whether that statement is embedded in how they speak, how they think, how they talk, and not just, "Oh, we're making a statement because it's what we have to do"; or "We are making a statement because it will get more people to come."

Because that can then, if you make a statement to say "Yes we accept everybody" because that's what you feel you have to do as an event organiser, or you think you're going to get more people paying to come to your event, that can be very dangerous for somebody who is LGBT to come to that event and then something happens and there isn't the response from the event organisers that is in line with the statement they have made, or they don't feel confident to raise that with an event organiser because maybe it happens two or three times in the first half an hour. And I think when you are an LGBT person and you are going to, say, a Heathen event or a group or a camp or something like that, you hear, like Jens was saying, you hear these jokes, you hear slurs, you hear insults, all the time. And all the time in your everyday life, and you only have so much energy to deal with them. So you have to decide, as an LGBT+ person, whether you are going to challenge what's been said, and whether you are going to put energy into objecting to it, or whether you just don't have enough energy to do that; you're not in that confident place.

So I think there is, like Jens was saying, there is that very big difference between, even when an organisation or an event puts out a statement, that if I go to those events, or I go to that group, or I go to like a big gathering, or even a pagan camp where they say, "Hey, we accept everybody," then I still feel very very wary, and I still go, like Jens said, being very aware of who is around and what I am saying, and what is being said. Are they using 'gay' as a slur? Are they using it as a joke? Are they seeing somebody who they identify as transgender or as a cross-dresser and are they laughing at them, you know, across the site? Are they saying, "Oh, look at that person, don't they look funny," and that tells me it's not safe, without me having to say anything.

And what Jens was saying about the gender roles, as well; so people's expectations of gender, especially in Heathenry where you can get very extreme examples of what is expected - what are gender ideals, almost. Those roles in ritual - so it can be something as simple as looking at the roles that you give people inside the ritual. If it's a ritual that takes a team to deliver, then is that team split along gendered roles? And is that then a signal to any LGBT person watching or participating in that ritual that it is not a safe place to be? Because that's a signal that you have very strong gendered stereotypes, and that might lead to, "We don't accept LGBT+ people in ritual. We don't accept LGBT+ people as having a valid faith." And it can so very quickly go through, you know, where Jens was saying to watch for those little small signals, and sometimes they are not obvious, that even the smallest signals can send the wrong messages, and make LGBT+ people not feel safe, and not feel included and not feel valid, especially, as Jens was saying, if you are new to being an LGBT+ person, if you have come to that realisation about yourself, and you are new to Heathenry, and you're thinking, "Well, where is safe for me to go?"



So I think there are, there is a lot here, I think. Yeah, there's a lot of things to consider, and that an LGBT person might not speak up at the time because they might not feel safe to speak up, and they might speak up after, when they feel safer and when they're at home and when they can send the organiser an email to say "Hey, this happened, and I need you to be aware of it so it doesn't happen next time," or "Hey, this happened and I won't be coming again," and it's...

Jens [22:15]

Yeah, you said safety, they don't feel safe enough; but I think it also links to the thing you said before, where you said we only have so much energy to spend on these topics. And the one thing, do I feel safe, and the second question on my mind is, is it really worth spending this energy now to challenge this here, or do I just see what happens and decide after that I don't come back to this place?

Suzanne [22:42]

Yes. Yeah, and I don't even tell the organisers that there's a problem because I don't want to go back. And by implication, anything that those organisers do in the future I won't want to go to. So yeah, there's a lot. [laughs]

Jens [23:04]

I would like to pick up two things Frigga said before. So the one thing is you said yeah, you never felt the necessity to tell people, "Oh, I'm heterosexual." And that actually has been my response quite a lot when I was asked, "Oh, but why didn't you tell us earlier?" Er, so, why should I? You didn't do yourself. But on the other hand, people assume me quite often to be straight. And you said yourself that you have these two categories, male and female: I'm absolutely happy being a male. That doesn't mean that I'm heterosexual. But the fact that I am absolutely happy to be a male seems to be the signal for several people, "Oh yeah, he's straight." And that's just incredibly wrong. So one of the bigger gay events in Hamburg was before the pandemic, and hopefully after the pandemic again, was the annual Bears Party, with about 1,500 participants - so that actually is big for a gay event - and I have been to many Heathen events when I've thought, "Quite a lot of you would not stand out there in any way, you would fit very well, from the way you look there. You're totally not aware of that." [laughs]

Frigga [24:39]

When I hear you talking, from an organiser's point of view, my first thought is then it would be great if LB... I have it here in front of me, I read it out loud and I'll get the letters more or less in the proper... LGBTQIA+... a person in the organisation, or at least as an advisor, or... Would it be helpful to have a person on the events that you can go to if things show up that make you feel uncomfortable?

Jens [25:25]

Of course that would be incredibly helpful, and we circle back in a way to this question, do I want to be the token gay of the organisation or not?

Frigga [25:36]

That's why I ask here...



Jens [25:37]

So it's extremely helpful, but it's not the first and not the second and not the third step, it's somewhere along the path. So that's definitely a good goal to achieve, but in the right time with the right people.

Frigga [25:58]

Yeah, and then I also think, if someone would be willing to take up that role also make us aware of what it is the token gay or the token lesbian or the... What does that mean, exactly?

Suzanne [26:19]

I understand that to mean that you are... Somebody is interested in you being part of an organisation or part of a group or part of a committee just because of that aspect that you hold. So to be a token gay or a token lesbian or a token trans person means to be picked just for that reason, and essentially not for the whole of the human being that you are; just, "Oh, you are gay, you can come on our committee and tell us what we need to do." But that puts an incredible pressure on that person to be able to explain why things might not be appropriate, and that person sort of... When we were talking about how much energy you have to deal with things, that person then takes on that role of teacher to a whole committee or a whole group; and if they then go, "Nope, I'm sorry, we can't do that," then that person then feels invalidated inside that group, and not able to be accepted as a whole human being and say, "Hey, this is an issue that affects me and people like me"; and the committee might go, "Oh, no, that's not an issue. We don't have that," and then you're ignored again.

So maybe to have, like Jens was saying, to have committees or organisers that it comes together naturally, that people feel, LGBT people feel like they're able to come and work with people to organise that event or work with people to organise that festival or that camp because they know that organisation is safe, not that the organisation needs somebody gay sat on the committee and therefore they find one person and put them in, because that won't change the culture of that event or that festival. It won't actually do the change that's needed, it will just let them tick a box.

Frigga [28:37]

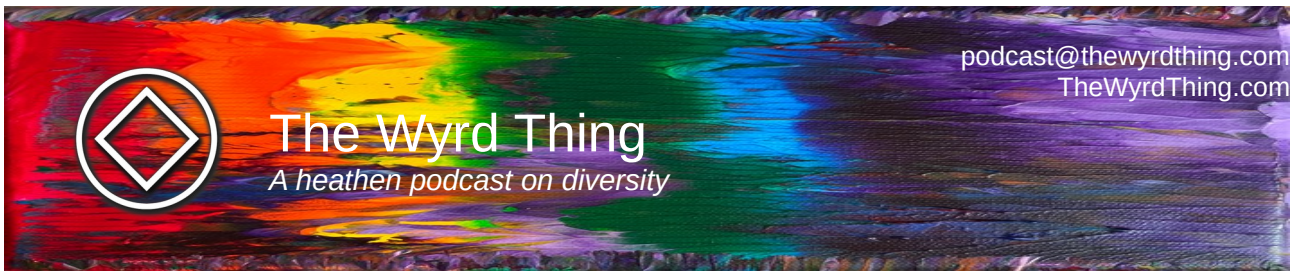
And is being the token also that an organisation or event can show off? "Hey, there is a gay or there is a lesbian or a transgender, see how inclusive"?

Suzanne [28:49]

Yes. Yeah, so, "We can't be homophobic: we have a gay person on our committee." It's like, yes you can, because you might not be listening to that person, and their lived experience and their understanding of what, the way that they know. But yes, it can be a very, very easy move for organisers and events, and leaders of groups to take, but it's not a very good move sometimes.

Jens [29:20]

I think it's a very two-edged sword, in a way, that more visibility definitely is better; so if you have such a person, it definitely sends out the signal, there is some visibility. I can't say there is zero visibility if there is such a person. So that would make a big difference. On the other hand, I spoke in the very beginning shortly about what do LGBTIQ+ people have in common and what-not, and it's a very diverse group in itself. So I totally cannot speak for any lesbians, for any trans people... I probably know a few more of them than the average mainstream heterosexual person knows, but



that's just I know a few of them. And I understand that my experiences have one similar or equal dimension to them, but there are so many others more as well, so I'm really not in a position to represent all these different people there. So that would also be another reason why I would feel very uncomfortable being in such a position. But more visibility is definitely what we need there. But that just starts with, you recognise some of this so that's also a challenge for me, maybe, to be more visibly gay - well that's one reason I can bring my husband; that's one option, to bring my husband. That's the best one, definitely. Actually the only I have.

Frigga [30:52]

[You] said "to be more openly gay", I mean I try to relate to it through my chronic fatigue and being less abled. I can remember when it started for me, I ended up in a wheelchair, but nothing was physically visible, so I had many times this question, "You can't see anything - are you really, is it really necessary to be in that wheelchair?" So how do you make it visible and still being just yourself? And is it indeed to make it more visible through the way you act or dress, or is it the other way around and through people should learn more and be more aware, and Heathen people become a bit more sensitive?

Jens [31:55]

Suzanne spoke about the gender stereotypes in ritual. To my experience that's also very much in the everyday life of a big convention, because one of the things which were most obvious to me the first times were I've seen a lot of women spinning, knitting, doing some sort of work like that - no men. And again, it's perfectly okay if the women like to do all the spinning there, it's their thing, great. Do it. But it does help if I just see one man knitting there in between, just to have a small break in this totally stereotyped picture. So, just if there is any male, straight Heathen out there who likes to knit, do it publicly on the conventions. It does help.

Frigga [33:00]

Yeah, interesting. I mean I'm, already for twenty years I'm working on a book about rituals, and I thought I was finished last year or two years ago and then I realised I need all these kind of things in, so when I hear you talking I think I will add a ritual where, you know, the men does the spinning or whatever, you know, get out of the stereotypes, get out of this... So it's a challenge I give myself for my book.

And I think with a lot of things when it comes to be inclusive I see it way more as a challenge, I mean gender-neutral language and that kind of stuff. I think it can be fun if we talk about it, to come up with ideas how we can change things and how we can in that way be more open and, you know, go away from the biases that we have, and the stereotypes.

Suzanne [34:10]

I think when you were saying there about watching for language in rituals that can be a very small but quite important point, of, yes, we often have very gendered roles, and being very mindful of those, Heathenry doesn't... It's often organised in very small local groups, which can then come together. So you can get bigger events, but at the local level it's looking at things like language in rituals, and what language we are using. Can we have gender-neutral language in the ritual? Can we have gender-neutral roles in the ritual? And are we able to not just make a statement but start moving beyond that? And also, if we are in a group and we're not sure if we've got LGBT+ people in there then maybe it's just asking. Maybe it's just having a conversation one day, either at a social



or post-ritual or pre-ritual saying, hey, what can we do, as a small group, as a local group, to help make our language more inclusive, help make our roles more inclusive? Has anybody noticed anything that we're doing that we can just adjust, and make more inclusive? And it isn't a one-step process; it isn't, "Oh, we have one gay person in our group so we're all okay." It's more likely a whole process and evolution of being mindful of individuals' lived experiences, what people experience in terms of discrimination; maybe in their work place or in their home life, and being mindful of not carrying that on in somebody's faith or spiritual life as well, so they, an LGBT person can then have a rich, deep spiritual life by knowing that they can bring their whole self to a ritual.

Frigga [36:38]

What I am thinking is when it comes to language that it is not limited to you have an LGBTQIA+ person around to change your rituals. I think why wait until there is a person like that? I mean, I want to change it even before that, so that people feel welcome and see it in that way. I've been working on a ritual lately, it's a seiðr ritual which I have for several years now, and I work with spinning and blacksmiths, though I always call upon the Seiðr Mothers for the spinning and the Seiðr Fathers for the smithing. And I really have been thinking about how that's, change that, and I thought I'll leave it, but I will add something, and now also call upon the Seiðr Siblings, so that everybody can role in what that sibling is. And that's a solution I came up with to be a little bit more open and go beyond the two roles.

Suzanne [38:00]

I like that.

Jens [38:00]

You could ask maybe for the Seiðr Elders?

Frigga [38:04]

That's also a proper one, thank you.

Jens [38:09]

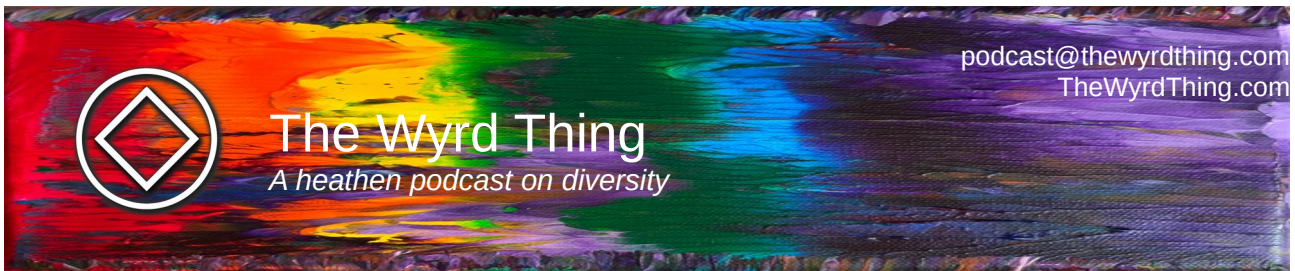
Gender neutral is a very, very difficult topic. We have three different native languages and it's different in every language. German is grammatically a very gendered language - so much more than English - and it's almost a poison topic in Germany at the moment. And as I said I'm perfectly happy being a man - I have no first-hand emotional resistance there just to stay in these roles, but when I see people opposing gender-neutral language, that also sends a very clear signal to me, "Oh, you're sticking to these very fixed gender roles," and I never know whether I fit in there or not, and that doesn't feel good. But I'm always in this position, do you accept me or not? What's more important for you at the moment? That I'm cis, or that I'm gay? So I don't feel safe and comfortable if people resist so much to this. Although I have to say it's a really complicated discussion in German, which would definitely go over the focus of this podcast.

Frigga [39:30]

We can make another episode about that.

Jens [39:33]

Yeah, with all the different languages there, hmm...



Frigga [39:38]

I've also here and there this kind of these questions and sometimes it really surprised me that women feel neglected or attacked because of neutral language. Why? I mean what difference does it make? And that is why I came up, for me was the solution to [...] the Seiðr Fathers, the Seiðr Mothers and the Seiðr Siblings, you just gave me the Seiðr Elders because then I... to me, I think I leave it more open and it's a way to express that at least there is one invocation where everybody can, in their mind, fill in what it is for them, and leave just men and women around, but I try to name more than just men and women. But this is also, I think, why it is important to talk with each other. Why is it, what does it do with you? Why is it that you are upset or confused by neutral language? I always think that it's, you first have to go and look inside, and does it make any change for you?

Jens [40:54]

So in our pre-podcast discussions we also discussed about why is it so surprisingly difficult for LGBTQI+ people to come out in a Heathen community, and we spoke about several perspectives there, but the one thing I still have on my list is the different risk assessment, in a way: what do I have to win and what do I have to lose? And for LGBT people who start to feel comfortable in a group, where they have not come out yet for whatever reasons, but the general vibes are good, it feels good; they have just found Heathenry... There suddenly is a lot to lose when you think, "Okay, if I come out now, this is gone, and what do I have left except the knowledge, okay, it wasn't the right group at all". But Heathenry very much lives on you connect to people, you do it with other people - it's possible but really difficult to be a Heathen all by oneself, all alone, so why come out of this comfort zone when everything's fluffy there and nice, accept we just don't talk about this one dimension of my personality, which I'm quite used not to talk about in the rest of my life now; and I could lose so much, there's a different risk assessment. Suzanne, would you like to fill in there?

Suzanne [42:48]

Almost feels like a pressure, so if you are LGBT+ and you find a new Heathen group, when do you know or when do you decide it's safe to come out? Or do you choose not to share that part of your life? Because the longer you meet with the group and the more you get to know them, which you want to do so that you know you can feel safe with them, then what points do you make that decision to come out, and then you risk losing that group and that friendship, those ties that you've made, you risk losing them by coming out. So you kind of then have to make a decision between two parts of your identity of which one is most important to you in that space. And that can feel very difficult, that you have to kind of make the choice to accept one part of yourself in that group but ignore another part, or hide another part.

Frigga [43:55]

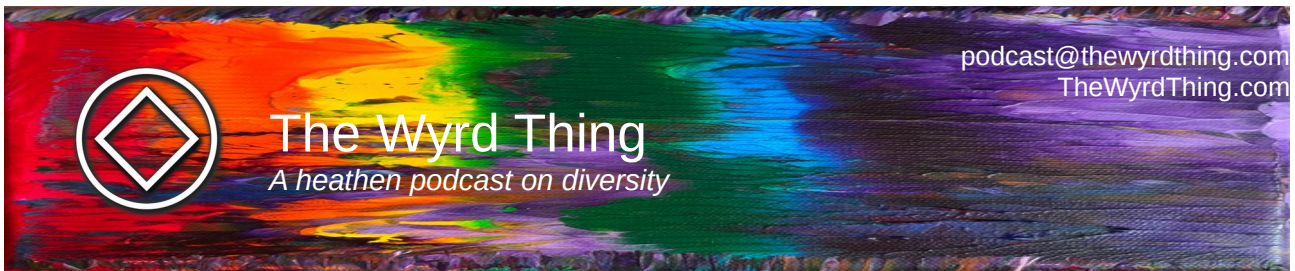
That really sounds sad to me.

Suzanne [43:58]

Yes.

Jens [44:03]

When we speak again about what's the common experience of LGBT people, as I understood and especially in our discussions before, one kind of common experience is that by coming out you risk



to lose friendships. And we spoke about that also with trans people, when trans people transition they have to come out - that's a different situation there - but still the common experience is, you do have the risk that you just lose people in your life. And in a way you can say, "Yeah, they're not worth keeping in your life anyway if they can't accept you like that", and I have done a few decisions in my life, especially my family, when I said or meant, when I showed people, either accept me the way I am, or just live with the fact that we're not part of each other's life in the future, but you only have so much energy to do that in your life, and that is one of the common experiences there. By doing this one step you definitely run the risk, I think every LGBT person is aware of that. Some have been very lucky and it happened in no important case, just in a few unimportant; others had a lot of these experiences but the knowledge that the risk is there is very common. And then again when you're new to Heathenry, you think you just have found your spiritual path, and you've finally got a group with which you can do this, there is a lot at stake at the moment.

Suzanne [45:54]

Yes, and for somebody who may have, in coming out, have lost contact with family members, or have lost contact with their spouse or their partner, they've broken up, and lost contact with their children, and then lost their job over coming out, and then they find a spiritual group and they finally start being able to create friendships, and then they lose that as well... It can be part of a very collective experience of loss, and almost guilt and shame in thinking, "Well, why am I this way? Why can't anybody accept me for who I am?" and that becomes "Why can't *I* accept me for who I am? I don't like who I am." So it can be part of a bigger experience. So when we were talking earlier on about the signals that groups can give, that events organisers can give, they have to be there and they have to be clear and they have to be consistent. Because somebody may be looking at that event, advertisement or having a discussion about going to an event online, and if they don't see those consistent signals, they may think, "I'm not going to risk going there and losing, you know, making friendships and losing them again."

Frigga [47:23]

I go silent if I hear these things. And I think there is a lot of work to do, and for a lot of people to become aware, and I think it's very important to hear these things. One of my life's mottos is "You don't have to understand to be understanding." And yet it's also if you get it, it becomes more easy.

Jens [47:49]

I would like to end and to sum up, a few of the things, what can people do to make things better. And the one first suggestion of me is, just don't assume someone's sexual orientation until you know it. Just keep it open in your mind. The other one is, don't be afraid of gender roles and stereotypes, but be aware of them, and if you see an option to break them up a little, just do it. Just for the sake of doing it, of making things more open, and especially for the LGBT people out there in the Heathen community, if you make yourself a bit more visible, you really help other people who join the group and are in this situation of having their antenna stretched out and searching for signals.



Suzanne [48:47]

I would add to that, yes you can choose to be more visible in groups if you feel you have the energy and if you feel safe that that's a safe thing to do for you. Because it's, it's about your safety first and then looking to maybe be there as a beacon for other people as well.

Frigga [49:12]

So that is one of the challenges for those individuals and groups, organisations, to learn more about safety, because that is what I hear you say a lot. And it's not only for LGBTQIA+ people, but it's also for people, for Black people, for people of colour, for people with disabilities; how to be more safe - how can we make it more safe for each other to be there, as we are, all parts, and not have to hide parts?

So thanks for today.

Suzanne [49:55]

Thank you.

Jens [49:56]

Thank you, Frigga.

Frigga [49:58]

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