



## Transcript Episode 6

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### 0:12 Jochem

Hello. Welcome to the Wyrthing Podcast, episode 6: Clichés. I am Jochem, and today I will talk with Jens and Rich about clichés in modern inclusive heathenry. When we discussed this episode, we talked about Thor's wedding. Maybe one of you can tell a bit more about this fascinating story?

### 0:33 Jens

That's one of the most popular stories of the Eddas. It's about Thor's hammer being stolen by a giant. And then they need to get it back, of course, because what are the gods without Thor's hammer. The giant asks to get Freya as a wife, and she deeply and heavily refuses to do this. So the next plan is to disguise Thor as Freya and send him to the wedding. And he goes there disguised as Freya with Loki as his trusted serves maid who gets him out of most of the trouble there because he is really not good in disguising himself as Freya. And in the end, they get back the hammer. So, extremely popular, and some people told me in earlier times: Oh, there is even queer content in the Edda. There is Thor, cross-dressing. I thought, yeah, that's maybe funny, but why is that queer and why does this relate to me? So, yes, Rich?

### 1:38 Rich

I was just going to say that one perception I've seen is not that Thor is queer, but that the fact that Loki immediately suggests, "Oh, all we need to do is to wear women's clothes and that will fix everything." That's not to say, the fact that he suggests it, as if this is something he does all the time. I think that's how some people have read it.

### 1:59 Jens

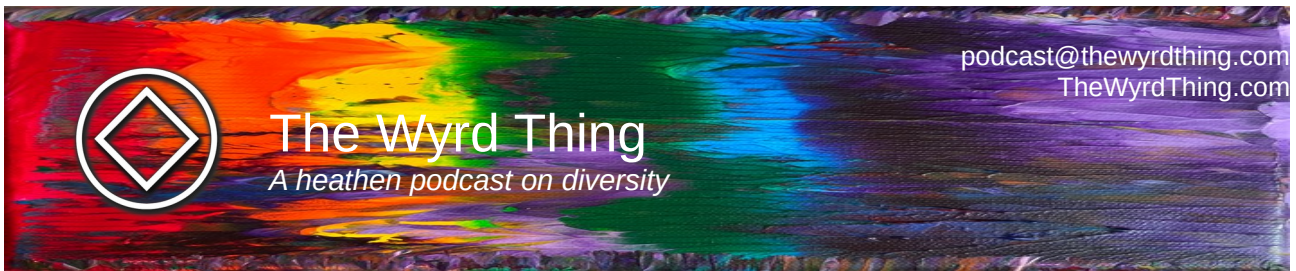
Interesting perception. If you look at the story, it's actually Heimdall proposing it. Loki jumps on the train very fast. But it's an interesting perception in itself that many people think Loki suggested it. It's his plan? No, it's Heimdall's plan. It's just Loki carrying it out.

### 2:19 Rich

I think it's very much the fact that he is very enthusiastic, is perhaps what makes it up. Yeah, I know what you mean. But it is certainly one of the more popular concepts. Maybe it's meant to be a funny story, "ha ha, men dressing as women, isn't that hilarious." That sort of point of view.

### 2:36 Jens

And it seems to be that for centuries now at least. My personal view on that is that I can really feel with Thor and can very much relate to him because he doesn't want to do this. It's just in his very own reluctance to put on women's clothes I think: Yeah, I can feel with you. I was always very uncomfortable with this quite widespread opinion still in the 90's when I came out that gay men are very effeminate men, that they so much enjoy to wear women's clothes and all this cross-dressing. And I thought: That's just totally different things. So cross-dress as much as you like, but that's got nothing, to little, to do with being gay.



### 3:19 Jochem

No, exactly.

### 3:21 Rich

I just wonder what the broader perception within queer culture of things like Drag Race and things like that is. Is that something that is helpful in terms of visibility or is it something, as Jens said, that gives, that, that adds weight to that distortion? You know, that sort of perception.

### 3:43 Jochem

I think it's interesting that when it comes to cross-dressing, people almost immediately associate it with drag. And cross-dressing and drag are two completely different things.

Most cross-dressers are straight men. While, as far as I know, most drag people are gay men.

### 4:07 Rich

Yes, indeed. But equally, there is the concept of trans people again and they fit into these categories neither but are often harmfully linked in there. So that is certainly to somebody who is cis, straight and older, they might find it, well, "gay, trans and cross-dressers, they are all the same, aren't they?" No, they are not. It's very very different things going on there, but...

### 04:36 Jochem

Indeed.

### 04:37 Rich

So there are certainly some weighty clichés.

### 04:41 Jens

Rich, you asked whether it's helpful or not to have these things like the Drag Race there. And when I came out or before I came out this was a bit of a barrier to me that there were all these public clichés. Mainly for gay men being there, at that time, they're effeminate men, they're not really men, they are somewhere between men and women. I am very glad that this is diversifying at the moment a lot, also due to better visibility of trans people. But in the 90's, it was very much messed up. And the plain fact that I couldn't self-identify with these clichés was a bit of a barrier to me, a small one but it was one to come out. And I know unfortunately many people, gay people who didn't realize for themselves that they're gay for quite a long time and in my opinion kind of lost several years of their adult life by being in this twilight. Because they just thought: No, that's not me. They needed to meet other gay people who you hardly find if you don't know where they are, who don't self-identify with that as well. But when I came into the gay community, into the gay scene, mainly in Hamburg at that time because I moved to Hamburg. I realized from the inside view that it is totally different. There are some gay people who totally love and embrace all these clichés. And who say: "Yeah, that's just me, I like this. That's what I am and how I am and how I want to be." There are other people who completely refuse them. Actually, they're the worst. Those who try to avoid these gay clichés at any cost. They're incredibly stiff and unfunny and boring. There are some of them. And then there are people who just play around with these clichés. Who can be very ironic about it. But the irony is quite often lost from an outside view. So, when you're



inside you realize, ok, he is not serious about it. He is mocking it completely. It's difficult to see from the outside. So I think it is helpful in the end if you see all the detail. It can be an enormous amount of fun there for the people doing it. But if you're blinded by the fact that you don't see this just as the cliché and then playing around you get the false impression about that.

#### 07:05 Rich

That's a very interesting point there, Jens, because, as you were saying that, all I could think of was: "Isn't that how people see heathens sometimes?" We know as heathens where we are playing around with horned helmets and the silliness. We also know that that's not true as with all other clichés but to an outsider we're just a bunch of weirdo's wearing funny clothes. So that's an interesting parallel there. Obviously it doesn't carry quite as much cultural weight.

#### 07:36 Jens

I think the effect is very much the same. So in the public perception you have these very visible heathens. They are also the ones which are shown in the media. All this Viking theme around that, that just gives good pictures. And people identify that. And from within, it can be a lot of fun and some people just embrace this and that's totally ok. You should just not mistake the two for each other.

#### 08:05 Rich

There is an academic who said to me: It seems to me that some of the tropes around heathenry, I don't think they worship the gods, they seem to worship the Vikings. That does seem to sum it up. Sorry, Jochem, you were to say something.

#### 08:24 Jochem

Oh no. Well. I think it's interesting what Jens said about the role of media in clichés. Because, often, when it comes to trans stuff, because I know about that, then it often goes with pictures of gay parade or of drag queens or stuff like that. Which emphasizes the images that trans people are men dressed in women's clothes. Which obviously isn't true and also goes beyond the existence of trans men. So media like images, of course, and preferably catchy images, which can influence the existing clichés even more, I think. What is your view?

#### 09:21 Rich

I think it's significant that every time or up until recently every time the PF was contacted by media organizations not necessarily with a nasty agenda but the first thing is: "Obviously it is coming up to Halloween. Can we film some witches doing a ritual?" I think, well, every time they want to film something like that, with any old voice over, reuse that clip. "And here's some typical pagans. Do they have a cauldron?" and so on. And obviously as heathenry is getting more popular: "Can we film a bunch of Viking guys, you know, drinking from horns and eating some chicken legs or whatever?" It's so deeply embedded, it's very hard to unpick that and I don't know what the right way to do that is.

#### 10:10 Jens

Before we unpick that, I think we just should make it clear and clear to ourselves as well. And when you said people worshipping the Vikings, I thought about the time when I was steward for my organization in Hamburg. So my most important function in my opinion was there to help people to



understand whether this organization and they fit to each other or not. So we had our monthly pub moot. And people interested in the organization came around. And there were so many of them who came there with a sentence like: “When I die, I want to go to Valhalla. Please teach me what I need to do to get there.” So for me, Valhalla is the ultimate heathen cliché.

#### 10:57 Rich

Yeah, I absolutely agree to that.

#### 11:00 Jens

I usually said to them, well, that’s not what this is about. I had two main answers to that: The one was: honestly, afterlife is very much your personal thing. We don’t have a fixed set: “This is what you have to believe.” This is personal gnosis. The other one, the more ironic one, was: “Who wants to go Valhalla? Only the second choice goes there. The cool guys are all in Folkwang. Why wouldn’t you want to go there?” But it’s quite similar to what I said about gay clichés before. That with these obvious clichés there, you attract some people you don’t really want to attract because they’re interested in the facade, in the cliché, not in the content behind that. And you may keep out other people who would fit perfectly. But they are put back by these obvious pictures on the outside.

#### 11:56 Jochem

Yeah, that’s an interesting paradox.

#### 12:00 Rich

Often the journey I’ve seen – Sorry. Jochem.

#### 12:06 Jochem

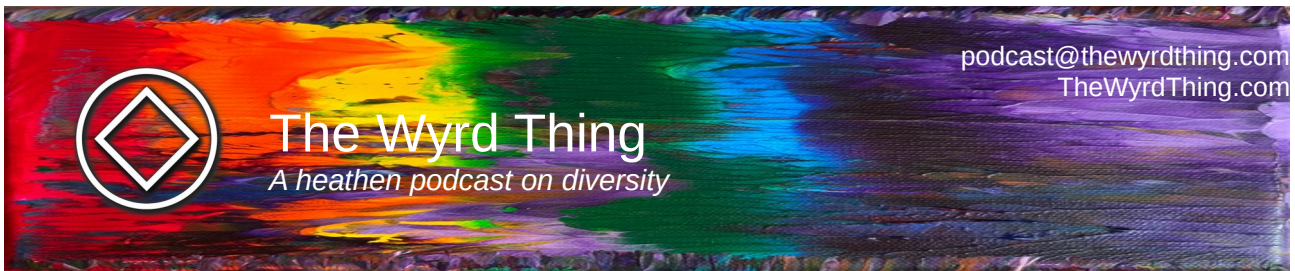
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#### 12:07 Rich

The journey I’ve seen is that people get involved because they have these sort of misperceptions in heathenry and when they find out it’s not that they either leave or they have enough self-awareness: If it’s not that, what is it? And then they learn, it’s this, this and this, you know, like Jens just said, and they get even more interested. So the truth, the actual story is even more interesting than what I thought. So this is fantastic. Whether they’re coming from watching the Vikings tv show, or they were into Lord of the Rings or they are just coming from a re-enactment group or anything else like that. So that is maybe where they are coming in from different angles. Once people either people don’t want to be told that this all nonsense and just leave and find a group which supports that, usually online, or they find out there is nonsense but if they are approached correctly in the right way than they find out the actual truth is even more interesting. So that’s hopefully what I’ve seen in the groups that I have been involved with.

#### 13:08 Jochem

And that solves the problem of people who are joining these groups with ideas that are not necessarily consistent with how it actually is. But it doesn’t solve the problem Jens said about people who are not feeling comfortable with these clichés and therefore won’t join. It could be



interesting how we can reach those people who are put back by the clichés but are interested in the content. Do you have any thoughts about that?

#### 13:31 Rich

I think it's sometimes, I think we talked before about symbols and things and making it clear that groups are inclusive. Which isn't just about saying: We're okay with gay people. We're okay with trans people. But making it clear that there is not just a diversity of people but also a diversity of beliefs and presentation. If that makes sense.

#### 14:16 Jochem

Yeah.

#### 14:17 Rich

So you don't have to dress up as a Viking to be a heathen. Equally you don't have to be straight to be a heathen. And those two things to my mind can go very well together in ways of saying: Heathenry is broader than you may realize.

#### 14:36 Jochem

Nice idea.

#### 14:39 Jens

We talked before about visibility. And I think a challenge we have there is the visibility of the common things, of the not outstanding things. So it may be a good idea, to show – as we try to do, but you need someone to pick up on that – that if we have a ritual, people come as they are comfortable to go there. Some people put on full re-enactment dress, some people put on full formal dress, but not re-enactment but business style formal or whatever, and other people just go what they are comfortable wearing on a Sunday afternoon. But you need to have this mixture there and it is quite difficult to make that visible but I think that's one of the challenges there.

#### 15:24 Jochem

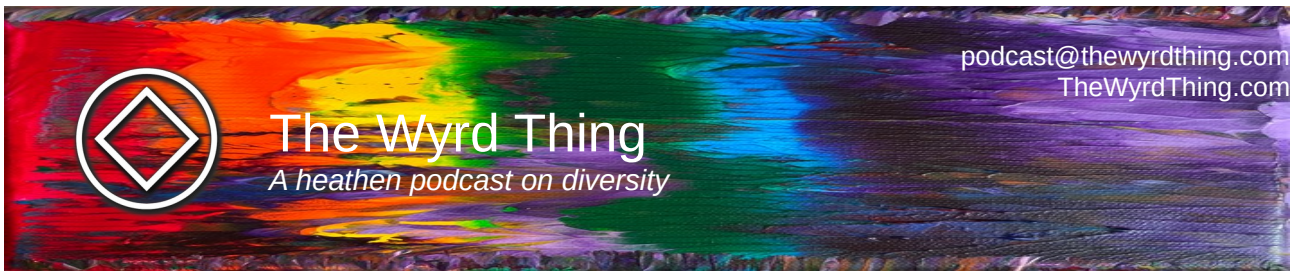
Yeah, I agree on that. As we said, media love the clichés because it provides colourful pictures.

#### 15:35 Rich

Oh, absolutely, I think that's quite a common thing. If they can get people wearing unusual clothes, stood in a forest, whatever, that sort of thing. However, I think it is getting slightly better. There was recent report of, I think by Vice Media, where they talk about some of the more bigoted heathens in America, and my first thought was, 'oh no, here we go, more negative press.' But then the other half of the video or journalism piece where they met: Here are the other heathens, who aren't like that and are inclusive. Which was good and positive. To say at least that. It wasn't all sort of negative, all heathens are racist or all heathens are bigots, and so on. So it is slowly getting better.

#### 16:27 Jochem

And maybe we ourselves can do a bit by, when we talk about or announce our events, we can emphasize the diversity of people that are welcome. Or when we have our own pictures, that we can make sure that these pictures represent all our people.



### 16:55 Rich

Yeah, definitely. I see an approach there. For example, where I've seen events running now, people often have to agree to a code of conduct. And you put things in that to make it very clear that certain kinds of behaviour are not tolerated. So we welcome all sexualities and presentations to our group and we will not tolerate any kind of prejudice towards that at our event. To make it very, very clear that if someone has problems with that, then they are going to have a problem with that event. We haven't had that, but I think it makes it very clear or at least to me it implies that by saying that we don't tolerate prejudice against people like that making it very clear. Then those people are welcome. I don't know whether that would send the right signal to you people. I am not sure. What are your thoughts, Jens?

### 17:50 Jens

I think this visibility theme is quite a broad one. It's an interesting point, it reminded me in the early years of my coming out, it very much annoyed me that camp men were seen as gay men, and people who are not camp were seen as straight people, straight men, whether that was true or not. So this cliché had kind of its own life and maintained itself. It was like: Oh, look at this gay men – oh, he is actually straight, you just identify him and fortify this cliché.

### 18:22 Jochem

Yeah.

### 18:23 Rich

This comes back to the cultural thing about being camp. I saw a documentary about people who were gay and who were straight who were, for want of better phrase or word, effeminate or less masculine presenting.

### 18:40 Jochem

Well, that reminds me of the toupee fallacy. Which means that clichés maintain themselves often because people only see the, so to speak, odd ones out so camp men who are gay are perceived as different. So gay camp men, yeah, of course they are gay. And they only notice these people being gay, because boring gay men don't catch the eye. Just like trans people. If you can see that they used to have a male's body, and it isn't possible or the person doesn't want to make it a fragile woman. Or trans men often aren't perceived as being trans. So that's called the toupee fallacy because you will only notice a toupee if it is badly made. And all the good ones you won't notice. So that applies here, too.

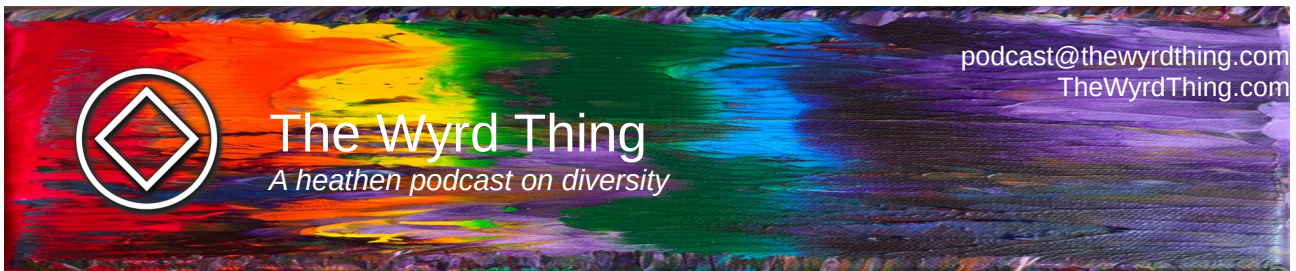
### 19:49 Jens

Yes, that also applies to the plain clothes, unremarkable heathens in optical ways who just live their heathen life and have their heathen spirituality without expressing this in the obvious symbols to the complete outsider there. So it would be good to make them visible as well in a way.

And when it comes to clichés and content, I would like to think about how we imagine our gods. Because I think we like to put in a bit of a clichés there as well.

### 20:21 Jochem

Interesting question. Rich, do you have any thoughts about clichés and our gods?



### 20:29 Rich

Yes, I think often about how the way people perceive Odin, for a start. About that. People might see Odin as this sort of Gandalf-type figure, you know with the long shaggy white beard and the big staff. But looking in the actual sources, he is anything but that. Cos he seems to be things such as violent and aggressive, but also kindly. It's a much more complex, nuanced idea there. What are your thoughts on Thor?

### 20:50 Jens

I know that he doesn't like to cross-dress. He is usually depicted as a very, very strong person but that very much relates to the sources. You need to be a strong person to handle this hammer. He is quite often shown, especially in modern pictures, as being not the brightest one. Which is not related to the sources if you look at that. So there is this one story with him having an argument where he outwits a dwarf. Which wants to wed his daughter, I think, and Thor tricks him by dragging the discussion until daylight breaks out. And the dwarf can't handle the daylight and turns to stone. But the general picture there is: Oh, he is very strong, he cannot be very bright in his head. Which is another cliché.

### 21:50 Rich

I think something else which is missed from Thor is the fact that in all the rituals he is the god you invoke to make something sacred. You make the area sacred by invoking Thor. You wouldn't want to do that by invoking a god who was stupid, would you? That wouldn't seem a very sensible thing to do. "We're going to make this sacred. OK, who is the stupidest god? Let's invite him in." And Thor was immensely popular in the pre-Christian period as well. That's attested in various places. That's not proof of popularity, but certainly we have the most surviving evidence for. There is a series of humorous videos online by two Spanish musicians called Pascu Y Rodri? And some of their videos are actually quite accurate to the lore, the actual text and things, and debunks some of the myths and things about Loki and Odin and things like that. And their depiction of Odin is quite amusing as well. I see sort of nowhere near the big titanic figure. It is mostly accurate. For some reason they depict Freya as an older biker woman. For some reason, I am not quite sure what they are getting out of there. And they also depict Heimdall, I think, they depict him as this sort of big, muscly guy. There is some funny things playing around with the clichés I suppose a little bit.

### 23:20 Jochem

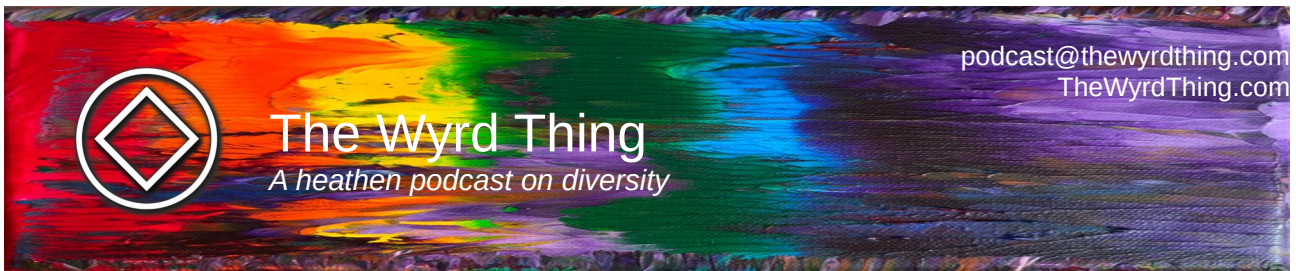
That's always nice, I think.

### 23:23 Rich

So in terms of how we present, do you think there is space to even publish books or to have, what are these called, an FAQ about heathen clichés? Do you think there is scope for that?

### 23:38 Jochem

Oh, I have to think about that one. I think it's an interesting idea, because the question alone make people think about the things they think they know might be clichés and not real knowledge. And I think a lot of clichés come from a place where somewhere in the beginning or in the centre of it there is a piece of truth. But then it gets bigger and then it gets its own life. So probably there is a



core of truth in a lot of clichés but obviously it is more than, the cliché alone or the core of the cliché alone.

#### 24:24 Rich

Of course, with heathen clichés you get all the unfortunate ones that heathens are all right-wing or Nazis, as you know. This is the thing. That we're all some kind of bigots. Even within the pagan community, people see runes, they say: "Oh, saw some runes there, these are racist." That sort of thing is something we have to deal with.

#### 24:49 Jochem

Yeah, So in that respect, I like a talk or book or whatever about clichés even more. Jens?

#### 25:00 Jens

You said there is a core of truth in the clichés. When it comes to the gods, I have a slightly different perception but it may end up in the same thing. Because there are various different approaches to see the gods and to understand them and one of them is understanding them as archetypes. Then you suddenly have this Odin – Gandalf – Merlin -Archetype as one of them. And I think that's a very valid approach to understand the gods. But there is a kind of spectrum from the archetype over to the stereotype ending up in the cliché. So you need to be very aware of what is the actual archetype and what is the core of that and what is just a cliché representation of it. But you can't really cut them into two because they are connected. So you should stay on the side where you have lot of the content and little bit of the cliché presentation. But I don't think it's a good idea to completely split them. So we also recognize the gods by very few essential symbols there. Odin is always the one-eyed. Full stop. If you just have a few figurines of gods there, of idols. So how do you tell who is whom? You get down to very few things. The one with the hammer is Thor. The one with only one hand is Tyr. The one with yeah, eye is only god – eh, The one with only one eye is Odin! The bright necklace is Freya. And how do you recognize Frigga, by the way? But that's just the way to recognize the idols, who is who, that's not the whole core of their identity. But to take that completely away would be difficult. Thor without his hammer would not be Thor anymore.

#### 26:51 Jochem

Yeah.

#### 26:52 Rich

On the subject of clichés and representations, that sort of thing, there is a big event coming up this year. Some sort of Freya's blot. We will be leaning into some of the clichés there, I suppose. Freya will have flowers and dancing and singing. So there are things associated with the gods. Are those clichés? Maybe, maybe not. I suppose that is something that needs to be culturally unpicked.

#### 27:17 Jens

On one of the larger gatherings in Germany, the larger gatherings of my organization, my hearth was asked to do the ritual there. And we were suggested a few topics, one of the nine worlds, so we were suggested a few of them, and we picked – I think you say Lightalhome in English, so, „Lichtalbenheim“, we don't go with the German words here. So the one where Freyr is the boss of it all. So it was very Freyr-themed. And I would have loved to have an antler for that. Because that's a very strong symbol for Freyr for me. But the two people with whom I did it, said: Sorry, no,





this is just so overused, some people just use this antler topic so much, we don't want to see it there! So I wasn't allowed to have an antler. Although I would have loved it, because it was just so typical of Freyr for me.

#### 28:14 Rich

So if it had been me, I would have tried to find the biggest antler I could find. If you're going to lean into a cliché, really, really lean into it. Absolutely. At least, that's my view. If it is one of the representation of a god, an association then absolutely go for it. I think.

#### 28:33 Jochem

And Rich, do you have any thoughts about the archetypes versus clichés, when it comes to the gods?

#### 28:39 Rich

I think the thing with archetypes and gods is a complex one. Because some people believe that the gods are not divine beings, they're just archetypes, representations, some Jungian thing. Other heathens find that offensive as a viewpoint. "No, how dare you suggest my gods don't exist." And every viewpoint in between. So I think you have to be careful if you're dealing with things like archetypes, although that might be an interesting point of view. But I think the other thing to think about is what again needs to be constantly unpicked, what I've seen in heathens servers and Facebook groups and so on is the idea that this god is a god of that. Odin is god of knowledge, Freya is goddess of beauty, Thor is god of beer and so on and so on. That sort of thing. And it's unpicking those sort of things, I don't know how to do it but again, people assume that it's a one-for-one representation. I don't know if you guys have encountered that.

#### 29:38 Jens

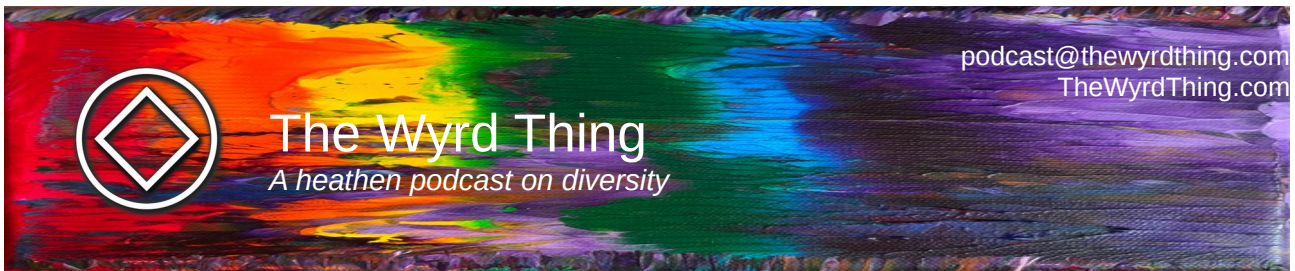
Oh, very often. I'm not so good in Greek and Roman mythology. As I understood it, it's more obvious in that cultural sphere. Whereas with the Nordic sources we have, it is definitely not a one-to-one representation. Because all the gods carry several areas of expertise in a way. So Thor makes the things sacred, he's got the connection to the weather, but he is also responsible for travelling and journeys. So he's got a whole bunch of responsibilities and they overlap with others. So you could see Freyr as god of travelling as well with Skidbladnir in his pocket. So it is definitely more complex with the Germanic gods. I am not very sure about Roman, Greek, Indian gods. Maybe it's clearer there or maybe I just know it less. But it is a very common perception. This is the god of this. If you want to do something about this, ask this. To be honest, if you look in the Edda, in the Gylfaginning – I should have my Edda here when we do this, but Snorri very much lists: You ask this god for this. If you have a problem for this, ask this god. So we have this in the sources as well, but it's just one part of it.

#### 30:58 Jochem

Aren't we limited in this because the sources that we have are so limited?

#### 31:07 Rich

I mean the limited sources is an ongoing issue. Because if you purely want to get back to some kind of authentic heathenry, which is impossible, but people try and people think it is true, and often people come into heathenry, me being one of them, think me must get rid of all this blending of



things, we must get back to the true heathenry. Which is a nonsense, because there is none. Because, do you mean true for this area, or this time, or this place, or this country, or this location? Do you mean late heathenry, early heathenry, bronze age heathenry, Gallic heathenry? And so on and so on. There is no, it becomes meaningless. And I think, but there also comes a point where the sources end. There is nothing. We don't know. It's not even a matter if we found this in archaeology and you can make a supposition but there are certain things we have nothing for. Naming ceremonies for children. People ask about them all the time. And as far as I know, there is nothing really in the sources at all. which even implies that that was a relevant thing. Do we just say: No, you can't have one. Or do we make one with the best of intentions which fits with the existing sources. And fits with what we know. And heathenry has to grow in that way, I think.

### 32:20 Jens

I think the sources are very rich. They cover 1000 years and half a continent. Of course they are very thin if we go to first three quarters, whatever of this 1000 years. Because it's the very few runic inscriptions and some sentences in Roman scripts. But they cover 1000 years and half a continent. So, as you said, Rich, what was valid for which area for which time we have no idea, but this is quite a treasure trove we have there. Especially with all the Nordic lore we have there. Which is so much more than other pagan, many other pagan, not all but many other pagan traditions have. It's kind of an ongoing debate between my husband and me when he says: You even know the names of your gods.

### 33:13 Rich

Yeah, in some countries I believe all they have is a list of names. I think is it Lithuania? I believe, where they found in the Christian sources a list of gods not to worship. Because these are, they don't know very much about them, but they found the list and the attempts. They told us not to do this, what does that mean? And there is some of that in the Anglo-Saxon heathenry where there is a list of things that the churches told the people not to do. You shall not carry an amulet. What's an amulet? What were they using that for? Endless descriptions. This is hundred years after conversion period. Stop bringing amulets into church. The punishment for amulets and how much penance you must do for bringing an amulet. It's clearly something significant there.

### 33:59 Jens

It's the very same here in Germany, in North Germany. So one of the major sources for some the names really is this list, these vows when the Franks conquered the Saxons in continental Europe. They made them vow not to worship these gods anymore. And this is why we know there was a god called Seaxnot here. It's the one reference we have. Don't worship him anymore!

### 34:24 Jochem

That's an interesting thing of history that people only wrote down what was important. And in a lot of things we don't know what they meant because what was obvious then isn't obvious now. I always liked that. Like you, Rich, said about these amulets. We have no clue what those were or how they looked like because it wasn't written down because then it wasn't necessary because everyone knew.



### 34:58 Rich

There is a suggestion, there is some archaeological work done on that because there is no textual stuff to go on, there is archaeological work done which seems to suggest that it was a way of curing illness, or that sort of thing. So if you were afflicted by something, then you should wear the amulet. This will protect you from illness. It must have been a deeply embedded cultural thing. Because really a hundred years or so after conversion when most people couldn't read. So it wasn't like they were getting secret books. So that's an interesting perspective there. I think some of this then leads into folk lore traditions where something just refuses to die and ends up becoming a thing people just do. where everybody in the community identifies as Christian and has done for the past 1000 years. But they still have these little, tiny little remnants. The meanings of the symbology has been lost. That's super interesting how that feeds into this, again feeds into clichés. You know, we do these secret acts. Why do we do them? Well, they feel right and they look nice.

### 36:02 Jochem

Oh, maybe that's interesting for another of our episodes.

### 36:07 Rich

Absolutely. I think, delving into this. There is one more cliché, which you might encounter. People who claim that they're from some unbroken line of heathens going back to the original Viking time.

### 36:19 Jochem

Oh yes.

### 36:20 Rich

Oh, you've met those people?

### 36:23 Jens

They're everywhere.

### 36:26 Rich

Many of them mean well, they say I've done my family tree and it shows I am a descendant of this person. Which is fine, I guess. But you see, well, the because of the way that genetics works about a million people are direct descendants of that person. Maybe ten millions, the very bottlenecks of genetics and population. But again, genetics doesn't transmit religion. If it did, we'd all be Christian.

### 36:53 Jens

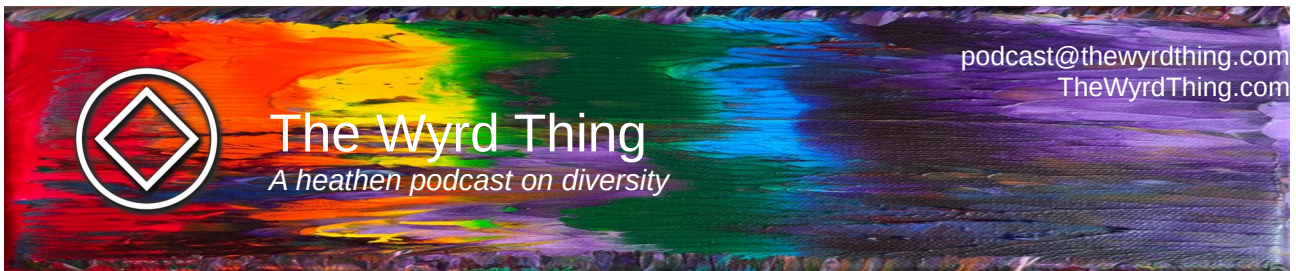
Or not at all in the first place.

### 36:55 Rich

Yes, indeed.

### 36:57 Jochem

It is how it works in Jewish society.



### 37:02 Rich

Yes and No. I mean, I'd want to ask a Jewish scholar to clarify that. But from what I understand Judaism is not, they mean culturally as well as religious. So it's not quite as... you can be culturally Jewish without being a practising Jew. So there is that added layer of complexity there. So there are many people who do not, you know, go to a synagogue but would consider them as Jewish. Whereas a person who doesn't go to church and doesn't believe, wouldn't consider themselves a Christian.

### 37:37 Jochem

Well, I came to learn that it isn't black and white with a lot of Christians, either. But let's get back to the clichés.

### 37:48 Rich

Yes, yes, please.

### 37:51 Jochem

Do we have any more things to say on this issue? Some last comments, remarks?

### 37:59 Rich

I have a few thoughts. My hope is that as we move into sort of more populous spheres or we become more visible as heathens, and at the same time that people who are in these other cliché societies that are part of ours also become more visible, that acceptance isn't a thing that has to be fought for. It becomes irrelevant. We don't have to... I'd like to think that some point we don't say "we must accept certain people". And this becomes: "What do you mean? Why wouldn't we accept them? What a strange question." The whole question becomes irrelevant. I hope that that can happen.

### 38:43 Jochem

Wouldn't that be lovely.

### 38:45 Rich

It won't be an easy and quick journey, but that is my hope.

### 38:47 Jochem

Thank you.

### 38:49 Jens

To speak about clichés, I think we should be very much aware of them but we should never be afraid of them. So as I said the most boring people are those who try to avoid clichés at any cost. So it's so much more fun to play around with them instead trying of avoid them. And I think that's my wish how we should cope with them in the future.

### 39:11 Jochem

That's really nice as well. Thank you. I would like to thank you both for today. It was an interesting discussion we had. In our next episode we will discuss the topic of inclusion versus exclusion in



modern inclusive heathenry. Who do we want to include? Aren't we by definition excluding people ourselves as well. It promises to be another interesting episode. So please join us next time. Bye!

39:42 Rich

Bye!

39:43 Jochem

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