



## Transcript Episode 16: Inclusivity and diversity from an esoteric point of view

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### 0:07 Jochem

Hello! Welcome to the Wyrd Thing podcast, episode 16. Today we will talk about inclusivity and diversity from an esoteric point of view. I am Jochem, and today I will talk with our special guest Vincent and Frigga and Jens. Frigga, could you start with an introduction, please?

### 0:28 Frigga

Yes. The aim of The Wyrd Thing Podcast is to discuss inclusivity and diversity from all possible perspectives. Today a new layer will be added. Our Belgian guest Vincent Ongkowidjojo is, amongst other things, a writer and expert on runes. I have known him for a long time and we have met and also worked together at various heathen gatherings in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and England. Runes and constellation work are a shared interest. My experience with Vincent is that often he has a refreshing and original point of view that makes you think. His books *Secrets of Asgard* and *Doors of Walhalla* are recommended in my opinion. Vincent's vision is rooted in Western and Eastern esoteric philosophies. He practices and teaches tai chi, meditation, runes and more.

In this episode, as said, Vincent will share his visions on inclusivity and diversity from an esoteric point of view. Now, we can use the same word but give it a different meaning. Especially when it comes to things like Heathendom, spirituality and esoterism. So, let's first have a look at definitions of the latter. I just picked them randomly from online dictionaries: - designed for or understood by the specially initiated alone - requiring or exhibiting knowledge that is restricted to a small group - confined to and understandable by only an enlightened inner circle - very unusual and understood or liked by only a small number of people, especially those with special knowledge. Vincent, could you please enlighten us with your definition of esoteric?

### 02:31 Vincent

Yes. It seems that the definitions you found on the internet are given from a specific point of view. Let's call that the exclusive view. The inclusive view is that esoteric teaching is for all people, and it teaches principles in the same way as science teaches the laws of nature.

### 02:56 Frigga

That sounds indeed rather different.

### 02:59 Vincent

The special thing about esotericism is that has a lot of things that science cannot explain yet. Esotericism has an answer or an understanding of invisible realities. That what I suppose I want to say is that the esoteric teaching describes the laws of nature in a more complete way than scientists today are able to. That's the reason why it's so called exclusive knowledge. It's not actually exclusive. It's because it includes the scientific realities, the signs that we all know about, which is true, like the laws of gravity and motion and all that kind of thing.



### 03:54 Jochem

And how did you become involved in esotericism?

### 03:59 Vincent

I've always had an interest in symbolism, folklore, magic mysteries and all that kind of thing. So I just looked at different things. And one of the things that came on my path, let's say, is esotericism. I think the first time anyone mentioned it to me and I'm speaking about a specific writer, which is Alice Bailey. I must have been like 20 and only 6 or 7 years later. I first looked into it and started to read a book by Alice Bailey. But when I did, it resonated with my own vision and thinking. And the thing that struck me most, I suppose, is the fact that by teaching principles, the esoteric teaching becomes universally applicable, which means that what esotericism teaches can be applied both in science and religion.

### 05:11 Jens

I have a question, Vincent. [Vincent: Yes] One of the defining aspects of science is if you make a hypothesis, you're supposed to suggest how it can be falsified, to name the circumstances which would disprove your hypothesis. So, hypothesis must be falsifiable in science. And sometimes they're falsified. So, science is in a state of constant doubt, which some people or many people say is what drives it forward. How do falsifiability and falsification apply to the esoteric teachings?

### 05:46 Vincent

It does in a different way than science does today, because when you look at scientific information, it comes mostly from measuring things and logical deduction. When it comes to esoteric teaching, there's a lot of information that you can't exactly know at first hand, but it opens the possibility to look for it from your own experience, I should say. So in the case of esoteric teaching, the thing that drives you forward is to look for the principles taught in esotericism through your own life experience. Which means that we don't actually use external machines to measure anything. We use our own mind to falsify or confirm what esotericism teaches.

### 06:48 Jens

Could you tell us a bit more about these esoteric principles? I'm a bit lost here because I don't really know what they are.

### 06:56 Vincent

The most common one, I suppose, is cause and effect. And I suppose you would immediately say this is a scientific principle. Well, that's exactly what I mean by the overlap between esotericism and exoteric science. Only in esoteric teaching, it doesn't only apply to physical things, but also within the realm of consciousness. And who knows what's beyond that. The big point in elaborating on the principle of cause and effect is that I must have been an initial cause to existence at all. Nothing ever happens without an intention.

### 07:42 Jens

That's not the same as cause.



#### 07:44 Vincent

Yes, I know I kind of said it. It's intentionally because intention is an aspect of consciousness. This may be an example of looking at things from an esoteric point of view, because if you have only cause and effect, what causes a cause? There must be something behind that which puts it into motion. So this is where esoteric teaching would posit an intention.

#### 08:15 Jochem

And if we go to inclusivity and diversity, what is your view on those issues?

#### 08:24 Vincent

My main opinion is that inclusiveness is a state of consciousness. For the simple reason that when you become aware of something, you include it into your consciousness. And in fact, this is what science aims to do because it wants to understand more and more. So it includes more and more of, of the phenomenal world into its understanding. That's the kind of inclusiveness. I say this because from an esoteric point of view, scientific research which would be included into the teaching because from an esoteric point of view, all research, if it's into the phenomenal world or into the world of the mind and consciousness, it's still trying to include more of what we can know or even things that we cannot know.

So in relation to the human mind, we have to accept that it's possible to refine consciousness in order to become aware of more and more things or more subtle things that we know at a certain time. If the human mind is only a static thing, that doesn't change, we won't be able to include more experience into our lives. If you refine the mind and your sensitivity, you become aware of things that you didn't know were there before.

#### 10:01 Jens

Well, you lost me again. You said human mind is static. Then you said people can become more conscious, more aware of things.

#### 10:12 Vincent

I said if it was a static non-changing thing.

#### 10:16 Jens

Okay. Sorry. Then the word was lost to me and thought this doesn't make sense. So we agree on that people can learn and minds can grow.

#### 10:25 Vincent

That's the bottom line. Yes. Perhaps I can say a little more on this particular topic from the point of view of Heathenism in general and Paganism, because there's an esoteric teaching. If you're open to the possibility of, for example, nature spirits and you refine your consciousness in order to be able to sense their presence, there is a possibility that you will be able to sense the presence of nature, spirits and even the gods. Even that they are real.

But from an esoteric point of view, there is such a thing as nature spirits and a class of beings to which what we call gods belong. So refinement of consciousness might give you an experience, a direct experience of beings that are otherwise invisible. And some people have spontaneous experiences of this kind, but other people have - haven't got it at all. And this creates perhaps a





disbelief in the existence of nature spirits and gods, while being open minded, may refine consciousness enough to sense their presence.

#### 11:51 Jochem

So do you say that by being open to the chance they may exist, that it is easier to notice that they do exist?

#### 12:02 Vincent

Yes. I think it's a first step to, to be open to the possibility. You don't have to believe in things you don't see right away. It's the experience of sensing them that will gradually make it clear to you that beings without a physical form are real. This is just an example. And by refining your consciousness and being able to sense beings like this, you also include their world into your consciousness. This is also a state of inclusiveness.

#### 12:10 Frigga

And diversity. That is what now is playing in my mind, that we maybe easier or seems to accept beings from other worlds than that we accept the diversity in Midgard of other people.

#### 12:58 Vincent

The same thing applies to being able to sense other people. And I think almost everyone has experiences of being in the room with a person changes the atmosphere or being with a group of people, changes the atmosphere. So you are in touch with a subtle thing that you can experience, even if you can't measure it at this time by scientific machinery. Perhaps in the future it will be possible to measure the atmosphere in a room, but it's able to refine consciousness if you're open to it and train it in some way to sense people, people's thoughts, feelings and intentions.

#### 13:43 Frigga

If you are capable of doing that and develop that, then I guess inclusiveness indeed becomes natural.

#### 13:53 Vincent

Yes, that's the case. So given that the refinement of consciousness is the natural evolution of the human mind, that will perhaps come a time when we are more aware of what other people feel and think. And almost automatically as a response, become more understanding to other people because we have a direct experience of how they feel at a certain moment.

#### 14:23 Frigga

Yes, it starts with body language. Because that's what they often say, that communication is only a few percent words and the rest is body language.

#### 14:33 Vincent

Body language is the concept. But what actually happens is that the mind registers much more than what you can see and hear, and people interpret the body language as the reason why they understand other people better. But in my opinion, what actually happens is that when you see and listen to a person, much more information is absorbed in some way than by the physical senses. So, it's a direct mind to mind interaction. In my opinion.



### 15:15 Jens

I suggest that we also just get much more information by our senses and into our consciousness. So when it comes to body language, but also to subtle other things and even to smell. We don't like to speak about that as humans for a strange thing, but we do recognise the smell of other people. And it gives us a lot of information which we don't process consciously, but which form our idea of what this other person is at the moment and in which state of mind they are, which emotions they have. So maybe it's the mind to mind connection. You said maybe it's physical, you know, sensory experience, which doesn't make it to the conscious level. Maybe it's both of them.

### 16:03 Vincent

Well, the mind to mind connection is also mostly on an unconscious or subconscious level. You can become aware of it once you develop consciousness in a certain way. The reason I mention it particularly is because the mind to mind contact is very direct. It's immediate and when you use the outer senses vision or the smell is always secondary, it goes through a certain filter and it goes through the brain consciousness, things that you said, it has to be processed first. So I think it's possible to bypass all that by a direct mind to mind awareness.

### 16:48 Frigga

And because what comes to my mind now is if you learn to be more aware and more, or focus maybe, on the mind to mind that you can pass your own prejudices and biases.

### 17:02 Vincent

I am trying to process your question, because if you're speaking from the point of view of direct mind to mind contact and the mind, whether conscious or not, will immediately sense the truthfulness and about it and the feelings that it is enveloped in. So, it gets all the information right away.

### 17:31 Jochem

And do you think this might do to mind connection? Is this a basic quality of our minds, or is this somehow some expanding consciousness?

### 17:45 Vincent

The basic property of the mind. First and foremost, because minds are from an esoteric point of view, specific level of reality. So all minds are on the same level. They communicate on that level. There is no need for the mind to communicate with another mind through physical senses or even through emotions as the possibility of direct mental communication.

### 18:19 Frigga

Are you then on the level what a scientist like Rupert Sheldrake calls the, the morphogenetic field?

### 18:28 Vincent

I'm not sure because I think he explains morphogenetic fields as the blueprint that living things have to to grow into.



### 18:41 Jochem

I think this morphogenetic field has to do with what they researched. When people try to solve a crossword puzzle in the morning, people tend to find it harder than when they try it in the evening. And the explanation is that in the evening - and then I am talking about crossword puzzles in, in morning news newspapers. And if people try to do it in the evening, then more people will have solved this particularly crossword puzzle. So they find it easier to solve it them, themselves compared to people who try it in the mornings.

### 19:28 Vincent

Yes. All the things that you think manifest on the level of mind and thoughts become accessible when they have been thought. So other people can pick up the thoughts, especially when you try to solve a puzzle. You focus on a very particular thing by focusing, focusing on this particular question, you tune into the collective thought, I suppose that's been created around the puzzle. This may help you find the answer because it's already there. So people have done the work.

### 20:14 Frigga

And then my mind is, is also going into the importance of realise that even what you think can be of influence. And I trained myself, for example, if I'm having my nasty and very ugly and unkind thoughts that I keep them really to myself. I don't want them in any way go into the world and then I'm free to think whatever I want. I don't want to spread the ugliness into the world, so to say. Also, you have to be careful with language and have to be careful what you say and not just, you know, saying everything because we have freedom of speech, or whatever.

### 20:53 Jens

If the minds are connected in this way, doesn't help to think it for yourself and not to speak about it because the thought is there and it's connecting to others. Whereas if you need language to spread the idea, it makes a lot of sense to watch your language and keep the negative things to yourself.

### 21:13 Vincent

So, take this step by step and the first thing you do is not speak about it. The second thing is try not to think about it. It's a gradual thing, just like refining consciousness is. Refining your personality in this way is an ongoing test. If you really want to not affect other people by unkind thoughts or emotions, you first of all don't speak them. And secondly, you try to, to pacify your emotional states and have less and less critical thoughts about others and yourself. And using this as an exercise continuously will gradually clear your mind and clear your emotions from the negativity. We can't expect that this happens from one day to another.

### 22:16 Frigga

Oh, no. And it depends also what type of brains you have. Because I - I'm not kidding - I always say that there is a gap between what my brain thinks and what I think. And I can't always that easily call my brains down.

### 22:33 Vincent

Well, esotericism has quite a lot to say about this because the mind and the body and the emotional, the emotional being that you are, are three different aspects of yourself. And they





influence each other. So there's three different influences that you, as an individual trying to interact with the external world, are determined by.

There's actually two more influences, and that's the personality as a whole, of which the emotions, the physical body and the mind or the mental body are aspects of. And esotericism also teaches that we have a soul. The soul has its own quality and sometimes the quality of the soul and the quality of the personality are in conflict. Because you as a person would like to have this and the soul as a being without any preferences would like to do something else entirely. And this can create an inner conflict. And what you just said about the brain, well, the mind is on a certain - has a certain quality and the body has a particular quality. The brain as a physical organ is under the influence of the body. So it's very much possible that your thinking quality is constantly influenced by two different perspectives.

#### 24:18 Jochem

Is there a way to combine those different qualities, or get those more in the same spot?

#### 24:27 Vincent

Yes, it's called alignment. What you look for is an alignment of the different qualities that you are made of physically, emotionally, mentally, as a person and as a hyper being, which we call a soul. You try to integrate your thoughts and feelings and being that you have a sense of yourself in one big unified thing with one purpose and one view on things. People can have all kinds of emotions that drives them in a certain way and have a whole set of ideas which come from the mental plane, drives them in a different direction. And there arises a psychological conflict and inner conflict. So, the question is how do you align those two, so that both from an emotional point of view and a mental point of view, you can make progress? So, there's more friction when you have feelings and thoughts that go into opposite directions. And there's more harmony, you're more at ease when you somehow learn to integrate thoughts and feelings into your, what do you think of yourself as a whole in people have a sense of being themselves. It's either you as a person or a soul. I think it's also the conflict between wanting and thinking different things that may drive to progress and inner refinement or personality development.

#### 26:15 Jens

Is there a concept of something like good and evil in esotericism?

#### 26:11 Vincent

Actually there is, but it's quite difficult to answer because there's no such thing as something being good or bad from an esoteric point of view, because both have purpose. So I don't exactly know how to answer your question, but I know it is a concept in esotericism. Perhaps if you're more specific about it.

#### 26:49 Jens

I can try to explain how I came to ask this question. When you spoke about the alignment and the different thoughts and feelings within a personality, I asked myself: What if people decide they want to align to some thoughts and feelings and well, how to say that in English, to some of their desires which other people might consider evil at that moment? Would that be something which would be considered positive or negative from an esoteric point of view? If a person realises they have a desire to be cruel, they want to align themselves because they have another voice in their head



which says: 'This is wrong. You really should not do this.' I wonder where there's going from this esoteric point of view if I tried to bring them all together and align this different inner currents within a person.

### 27:46 Vincent

Okay. So now I understand your question much better. It's from the human standpoint, esoteric teaching could say that good and bad are good and evil, are associated with the terms, are spiritual or material. If you constantly choose for material things and material goods, your consciousness is focused on things that are transient, and this doesn't help you in the long term. So it hinders your evolution, which is why it's called bad from an esoteric point of view. And when you look for the things that last, like friendship and joy and being of help, your community, has strong, constructive sides. It is more of a spiritual nature and will help you grow and refine your personality. So this pushes you forward from an esoteric point of view. That would be considered the right way.

So being materialistic from an esoteric point of view is usually associated with being selfish. And this is the root of evil from an esoteric point of view within the human context. But being selfish is the culmination of being an individual. So it's also a necessary point of evolution that humanity has to go through. Hence the conflict today that many people feel in themselves to be selfish or altruistic. It's the main conflict, I suppose.

### 29:51 Frigga

Yeah. Where do you find the balance between 'I' and 'we'?

### 29:57 Vincent

Well, now we come to the subject of inclusiveness. Because the individual, when it becomes more inclusive of other people, how they feel and what they need, you kind of automatically find your position among other people. And you start to be a link in a group of people that your community, let's say. So, two things. It's necessary to be an individual to make individual progress. When you make progress, you become more inclusive of other people's thoughts and feelings. You never lose your sense of individuality, but are more inclined to act on behalf of the community. At that point, the sense of I is only parts of the We. And as time goes on, the We becomes more real and concrete.

### 31:03 Frigga

Yeah, and We to me is not limited to human beings. It is relearning that we are part of what I start calling the Community Earth and that also our hidden communities are not only humans, but it is our surrounding, the animals, the air, everything.

### 31:23 Vincent

This is also true from an esoteric point of view. The whole planet can be seen as one big organism in which every species, and perhaps even every individual within the species, has a position just by being there. You play your part.





### 31:41 Jens

You said in the beginning that one of the esoteric principles is the principle of cause and effect. And I conclude that this also means from this point of view, that just everything is connected to each other.

### 31:52 Vincent

Yes.

### 31:53 Frigga

The web of wyrd.

### 31:56 Jens

It is very much so. Yggdrasil.

### 31:59 Vincent

Yes, everything has an impact on the surroundings. So your mind, not just your actions, but the mind too has an impact on your surroundings. We can see how nature and the climate has an effect on human beings.

### 32:19 Jens

And unfortunately the other way round as well.

### 32:22 Jochem

I would say this interconnectedness would go further than what I learned when I studied biology. And then we learned about ecosystems and all the species involved have influence on each other. But I think you talk even larger than ecosystems.

### 32:43 Vincent

Well, yes, from an esoteric point of view, you always have the invisible realities to account for. So if you look at planet Earth and see it as one big organism, you have to suppose from an esoteric point of view that there's a being that this is the body of. Which we as human beings and a species on this planet are only a part. Perhaps acting out one specific quality that's present in this being that we call Earth, or perhaps Mother Earth or whatever name you want to call it, the deity. In the same way, the whole, whole humanity has one big soul, is something we have to presuppose.

### 33:35 Jochem

So you say the people are not separate, but they are in a way one entity.

### 33:43 Vincent

Yes, from a certain level, one entity. And this is also what esoteric teaching and perhaps experience, if you've had it, teaches is from a level of consciousness. There is no sense of separation. You feel connected to your fellow human beings and you feel connected to the animal world and to the plant world. You don't only intellectually realise the unity of it, but you actually experience the wholeness of it.



### 34:16 Frigga

I think that happens during rituals because then you have this focus on and togetherness and the whole sense of community feel powerless and you're way more aware of all that kind of things.

### 34:31 Vincent

Both ritual and meditation are designed to change your state of mind, and through an altered state of mind, you become aware of more subtle things than everyday life. And it's also important to do ritual and meditation in group formation because the joint effort to look for a deeper, consequently more inclusive kind of awareness, strengthens itself stronger than when you do it alone. So you support each other when you do group meditation or a group ritual.

### 35:15 Jochem

As many of us will have experienced.

### 35:18 Jens

I have very mixed experiences with group meditation. I've started to only do it with people I trust a lot or try to do it only with people I trust, because I had some unhappy experiences in group meditations and kind of random groups, when suddenly my experience went into a direction which was very personal, upsetting. It doesn't help if you have some demons in your past there, as queer people almost have by default, if you think about that. And you have some people trying to guide a meditation but are not really aware of which demons they might stir. So I know that group meditation is quite powerful, but all things powerful can be dangerous as well.

### 36:06 Vincent

I suppose you have to take the risk. When you start to meditate, you have to look for someone who can teach you and as you suggest, it must be someone you trust. It's kind of the responsibility of the person who guides the meditation to have that kind of awareness, to be able to pick up your thoughts and feelings while you're doing the meditation. But I know from experience that it's not very realistic to.

### 36:36 Jochem

You mean when the meditation is happening?

### 36:40 Vincent

Yes. Because when you guide the meditation, you're kind of in tune with what people around you do as a response. And sometimes you want to guide them in the right way, but it may be counter-effective. So a good teacher would be able to guide the meditation and consider your personal practice of it. It's not the... You still have to do it yourself, of course.

### 37:11 Jochem

It reminds me of a weekend training that I did some years ago with Raven Edgewalker, British witch, and after all kinds of information about how to do a trance with a group of people. We also talked about what to do if, if things go wrong. And they taught us a couple of tips and tricks, what you might be able to, to do. Or when suddenly a door, a door makes... goes open with a lot of noise, or that kind of unexpected things happen. That was really interesting to hear from such an experienced teacher.



### 38:02 Vincent

Well, unexpected things happening shouldn't be a problem at all when you do the meditation. The difficult thing is when you do the meditation and someone goes, has a bad trip, for example, it's difficult to correct it in the moment because you're guiding a group. And even if you would guide the individual, you have to gradually bring the person back. So in this respect, the ritual is different because you can simply step out of the ritual and you step out of the atmosphere. But the meditation is stronger because it's purely mental, purely in the consciousness, and you don't have the interference of the external world. While ritual uses external things to, to get you into the atmosphere.

### 38:48 Jochem

I like to add one, one thing when we talk about interconnectedness, going back to Heathenry, I think Yggdrasil, our world tree, might be a good example of how worlds and beings are connected.

### 39:08 Vincent

Yes, I agree. The tree is the symbol of connection, specifically Yggdrasil. It has its roots into every world and it connects all the beings that exists, unites it as itself, and also its roots reach into the three different wells. But the well, of course, is a source of things which everything arises. So, yes.

### 39:39 Frigga

It rises and recycle.

### 39:42 Vincent

Yes, and cycles. Goes through the cycles.

### 39:46 Frigga

Thinking of Yggdrasil and how it connects us with all the beings in the nine worlds, with all the other worlds, is an inclusive thought.

### 39:58 Vincent

So Yggdrasil the world tree brings together many of the animals too, and it has these different layers like in many other mythologies. As for deer or harts that feed from the bark. There's the birds in the, at the top of the tree, the hawk and the eagle. There's the snakes and the dragons among the roots. And these are the three levels. They unite the physical worlds of the snakes and the dragon with the upper world, celestial world of the eagle and the hawk. In between is, let's say, the human world. So it's this connection between heaven and earth.

### 40:45 Jens

The connection is mainly made up by Ratatösk. I think we should not speak about Yggdrasil without mentioning Ratatösk. This also shows that many of the information is transmitted, and transmitted badly by the way, by language because Ratatösk is gossiping around all the time.

### 41:03 Vincent

He may well represent the inner dialogue that people have trouble with quietening. There may be a better example of bridging the gap between material plane and the spiritual plane in Norse mythology. And that's the Rainbow Bridge. This one connects earth with heaven. The gods actually





descend across the bridge to commune with the beings on the material plain, come down the Rainbow Bridge and gather around the tree or the well, the well of Urd. The Rainbow Bridge is a two way connection upward. It's our aspiration for the spiritual things, and downward it's the race of the gods to come down and interact with us. From an esoteric point of view, it's actually the connection between the personality and the soul.

#### 41:58 Frigga

But talking about all the bridges and the tree and connectedness, I think this is a nice point to end up this episode.

#### 41:07 Jochem

I was just going to say the Rainbow Bridge, I think it's an excellent thing to close this episode with. I would like to thank you all for today. In our next episode, we will discuss poverty within heathen communities with our special guest, Devon. It promises to be another interesting episode, so please join us next time. Bye bye.

#### 42:33 Frigga

Bye bye.

#### 42:35 Jens

Bye bye.

#### 42:37 Vincent

Bye bye.

#### 42:39 Jochem

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