



# The Love of Destiny: the Sacred and the Profane in Germanic Polytheism

*Dan McCoy*

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We're all familiar with the pop culture depictions of Norse mythology that are shallow and trite at best, and often downright misleading. They owe far more to puerile fantasies of being a macho superhero than they do to the ways in which the pre-Christian peoples of northern Europe actually thought of themselves and their spirituality. Even many of the attempts to revive the practice of heathen spirituality in the modern world suffer from similar shortcomings; many of these attempted reconstructions have unfortunately only reconstructed the most superficial elements of this ancient tradition, grafted them onto an essentially Christian way of perceiving and experiencing the world, and missed the bigger picture. *The Love of Destiny: The Sacred and the Profane in Germanic Polytheism* explores this bigger picture. In this relatively short book or long essay by Dan McCoy, the author of the articles on Norse-Mythology.org, many of the recurring themes in these articles are explored in much more depth. The book articulates the heart of the indigenous Germanic worldview – the unconditional affirmation of the world as the very embodiment of the gods – and shows how the rest of that worldview is structured around that central idea. To do this, it “translates” the narratives and images that comprise the pre-Christian mythology of the Norse and other Germanic peoples into the more familiar idiom of conceptual language, and contrasts this polytheistic mythology with the mythology of four monotheistic religions: ancient Judaism, Greek rationalism, Christianity, and modern science. It argues that many of the most taken-for-granted ideas in the modern world, such as the dichotomy between “good” and “evil” and the dichotomy between the “objective” and the “subjective,” frame their topics in counterproductive, monotheistic ways, and shows how Germanic polytheism offers compelling alternatives that are truly “outside the box.” Ultimately, it evokes a way of engaging with the more-than-human world that honors our inescapable and awe-inspiring entanglement within it.

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