



## Transcript Episode 13: Ross' Rant, part 2

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### 00:09 Jochem

Hello. Welcome to the Wyrd Thing podcast, episode fourteen, Ross Rant Part Two. I am Jochem, and today I will talk some more with Rich and our special guest, Ross. Part One was about the role of academics in modern heathenry, and our discussion went into all kinds of directions. We talked about Völkisch heathens and Nazis, about image and prejudices, about the old days, about symbols, about the lack of decent books and opportunities to properly educate ourselves as heathens, and about words and their meaning and flexibility. Today, Ross will share some thoughts on the future of heathenry. In our pre-chat, Ross, you said something interesting about religion, that it's mainly communication?

### 00:58 Ross

Hmmm. Well, that's the theory. In the study of religion, we constantly talk about, what is religion? Is religion even a thing? So, one big theory - or I suppose it's a set of theories, it's a kind of dialogue that's happened in the study of religion - is talking about religion as communications. But I think it's open for debate about whether we should be gate-keeping, not only on historical information but on what you are allowed to do. So on one hand, you've got the historical thing. And I think you make a really good point, if I say to you: "No, no, no, you can't worship Loki because he was never worshipped historically". Okay, that's some historical information. Thank you for that. I don't give a shit, I'm going to worship Loki.

### 01:49 Jochem

Yeah.

### 01:49 Ross

Then you've got a great point. I think most mainstream, open-minded heathens are leaning more towards that kind of thinking. However - and this is a problem that is innate to inclusivity, it's innate to the problem of democracy - is at what point do you stop people claiming things? So it's okay to worship Loki? But it's not okay to be Völkisch, say, and all that baggage that's normally associated with being Völkisch? It's okay to do whatever you want as long as it's not exclusionary to other people. So it's okay to have freedom of speech, but it's not okay to be a Nazi. You know, that is a tricky situation. It's a tricky situation for heathens, so when we're policing our online groups.

And it's a tricky situation for, say like, the police. You know, do you stop neo-Nazis from demonstrating in the street? Because on one hand the law says 'freedom of speech', on the other hand it has to protect people from being oppressed and discriminated against. So if a neo-Nazi group is using symbols or language, or even their very existence, and being allowed to demonstrate on the street. Say, like in Gothenburg, which they've had, the neo-Nazi group here has had the opportunity to do many times. They use the Tiw rune, and a lot of them are involved in far-right and Völkisch heathenry.



But the neo-Nazi organisation in Sweden, the Nordic Resistance Movement, is, generally speaking, allowed to demonstrate on the street. And at what point are those symbols oppressive to other people or insulting to other people? So the police in Sweden is constantly challenged with that problem. And if you talk about communication, then, do you have the right to communicate certain information? So these neo-Nazis, they are communicating that the Tiw rune is a symbol of neo-Nazism. And that it's a symbol of Nordic, or in this case Swedish, cultural heritage.

If you turn that around and on the other side: Are you allowed as, which is quite common amongst the trans community, or trans heathens, I understand that Loki worship is a way to communicate that they are trans? Or that they have a progressive interpretation of the religion? So I have a right to worship Loki, even though it wasn't done historically, and I also have a right to be trans. I associate Loki with being trans, because he appears to be trans or kind of polysexual or polygender in the mythology.

So we have communication there. You are communicating something as a queer heathen. You're communicating something as a neo-Nazi; you're communicating something as a Völkisch heathen. That is why we quite often use symbols. And the Tiw rune could be a symbol when it's used by neo-Nazis. But also Loki is being used a symbol by queer heathens. He is symbolising something to the rest, to other trans heathens. That's why you have these like micro-communities. Where, say, like a Facebook group on Loki worship. They're symbolising to each other, they're communicating to each other that Loki is our mascot, in some ways. Right?

If you expand that, I think that's what heathens do with heathenry. They're communicating to society, and to other heathens, that they are a certain type of person. Or they had a certain type of value. Or they have a certain type of interest in history.

### 05:52 Jochem

Yeah, and then, indeed, what people believe is personal. But what people communicate or what people do, that's a different matter, because that has an interaction with other people. And, as you said, of course we have freedom of speech. But we have also the freedom not to be insulted. So that's different laws that are sometimes clashing with each other. And that is difficult for police or other law people.

### 06:27 Ross

As long as that is a question in society, that is going to be a question obviously in the heathen community. And unfortunately, because there is a lot of controversial baggage in the symbols of heathenry - or, I should say, the symbols of what Nordic mythology means and is interpreted as in wider society - that is going to be amplified in the heathen community. So, you know, Nazism is the ultimate historical example of racism. And yet, or rather because they associate themselves with Germanic paganism, a lot of, in human civilisation, or post-modern culture, global culture, a lot of people would see modern Germanic paganism, or Germanic paganism in its historical context. And be like: "Hmmm...". If you have an interest in that there's something Nazi about it. Do you know what I mean?

It's quite often a lot of normal people have this sense, this small association somewhere. Of Germanic mythology, Germanic history as something to do with, or an interest in it, has something to do with Nazism. So then when normal people look at the Germanic pagan community, they see



these things amplified. It's a dialogue, like you say, it's a real ethical issue. And it will continue to be so. It will be a dialogue.

#### 07:58 Rich

But in terms of the interpretation of symbols again. It just occurred to me that, actually, you look any deeper beyond that, the Nazis weren't that into Norse paganism. But that's the narrative that's come down to us, because it's in fiction, it's in comics, it's in fantasy films. You know, I think famously, Hitler was an atheist and just didn't give a shit. He said: "Oh well, if it serves a useful purpose, you know, for the useful idiots at the bottom, fine. But as far as I'm concerned it's all nonsense." You know that was the real ethos behind it. And I think even the same with Christianity because that was used in the same way.

There was the weird occult branch of the SS for a bit. But eventually, when people realised they were just, essentially, useless, or weren't contributing to the war effort, then the whole branch was shut down. And that was that. It wasn't kept going as a cool thing.

#### 08:47 Ross

There's a really good scholar who's passed away now. A British scholar called Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke. And he wrote a few books on the occult and, yeah, the occult history of Nazism. So he has written quite a lot on Germanic paganism, and mythology, and culture, and how that was in Nazism. And it is quite clear from his research that Himmler was I guess what we would call a pagan. Definitely, yeah, I guess. You know, you might even stretch it to say he was a form of heathen? Unfortunately. But I think that's kind of true, that he was...

And it's a similar situation with Alexander Rud Mills in Australia. You know, he was Völkisch and he was a Nazi sympathiser. But he was actually a heathen, in the way we define it. I mean I don't like that, I don't appreciate it, I wish it wasn't really true. But when you try to define it on paper and motivate it why he's not a heathen, or why he wasn't a Norse pagan or whatever you want to call it, it's very difficult to motivate why he shouldn't be considered part of the modern heathen historical development. That's just the way it is, you know.

#### 10:06 Rich

I was just going to say. I did hear a quote, but I was not able to track this down, where... Because the Australian secret service were kind of concerned about his activities, because he was an absolute loon... But supposedly they did sort of bug his apartment or record him secretly. Some kind of wiretap, I presume, where he was recorded - much later on. Perhaps, I think this is by the time of the '60s or whatever. He was still around then - saying something like: Well, I don't really believe in it. But it's useful to get people into right-wing beliefs. But I've not been able to track that down.

Now is that just a spurious thing, or is that... You know, was that him just changing his opinion later on, and back in the '30s he fervently believed? It's impossible to know, really. But certainly, there was a point when he would've identified as being heathen.





### 10:53 Ross

That's really interesting. I'd like to confirm that. I've not come across that. But if that is true, then that is a classic example, or an early example of communication. He's using Norse paganism to communicate white separatism. And that is what I firmly believe is happening consistently, in the last few generations, with white separatists in heathenry. There's an argument that they're hijacking heathenry. There's an argument that they're not really heathen, but for me that's not really the point. The point is that they are using either, whether they believe in the gods or not, they are still using the medium of Norse paganism. It's generally the Norse focus. But, yeah, okay, theod. There's quite a lot of white separatists' theod, people who use Anglo-Saxon-isms. But I think people only recognise the Anglo-Saxon paganism as a kind of offshoot of what they recognise as Viking.

Viking paganism, like with the QAnon Shaman, is used as a means to communicate white separatism. It's... That is something that we need to fight against. Like having control over symbols is one thing, but controlling the dialogue, controlling the narrative.

### 12:22 Jochem

Speaking of that... Maybe if heathens and the scientists could join forces, then we could make more books. For example, proper books about... And maybe we could do some – I don't like the word, because it's connected to a way of thinking I don't like – but we could do some proper branding of heathenry. About what we believe and what we do. And talk about what you said earlier about symbols. Like the stag and the horse and the snake and the sun, and symbols like that.

### 13:04 Ross

Yeah, I agree, that would be nice. Going back to J. Stanley Hopkins. He is a big proponent of trees, was a really big thing in historical heathenry. Or heathendom, I think we should use that word to differentiate from modern heathenry. But in heathendom, historically, trees were really important. And he says that is really, really good for modern heathenry. Because if we were to focus more on trees rather than Thor's hammers, maybe we would get a better focus on connecting with nature. We would have a less macho focus. We would have less focus on Vikings. And more focus on ecology, environmentalism... So I think that's a really good symbol, and he's put up a really good argument for that symbol.

There's another heathen who's also academic, called Rune Rasmussen. Who runs a kind of... I joke with him about it, like it's almost like a cult. He calls his, I guess, ideology Nordic animism. And he's really influenced by his academic research into Afro-polytheism and Afro-paganism, I guess you would call it. So he has, as part of his... his cult (!), he's a big proponent of reawakening certain symbols. So one of the ones is the white raven. The raven symbol that he uses is an amalgamation of the raven banner. Which occurs on the Bayeux Tapestry as used by the Normans. And the same symbol also occurs on a coin from, I think it's from Jorvik, as in York. I think it was a coin used by, I wanna say, Cnut? But I think it might be Bloodaxe, I'm not sure, Erik Bloodaxe...

Anyway, so he uses that symbol, the raven symbol, as a symbol of Odin. And that raven symbol, he made a hybrid of that with a face from historical artwork. I think it's a face that some people associate with Odin or Loki. So he's produced flags. And encouraged Instagram influencers who are associated with Norse paganism. Yeah, like some girls that mess around with make-up, runic



make-up and that *Senua's Sacrifice*-type make-up. And the Wardruna-type stuff... He's encouraged those people to use that flag. As a way of reconstruction and reviving historical symbols, but in a modern perspective.

And he's also been involved in a yearly Christmas event in Copenhagen. (He's Danish.) Which is influenced by the German Krampus tradition, German-Austrian Krampus tradition. So they have like a bunch of hippies, basically, including some pagans and heathens, dress up in like goat-type things, suits, and generally like mummies' kind of clothes. And they do, you know, the hippy thing with drums, and the fire torches. And just make loads of noise and have a good time in Copenhagen, in early December. I think they do that every year, and they've done it for a few years now.

And that's a good symbol, and I think that's a good way of communicating things to society as a whole. And it's not strictly heathen, although he is a heathen. He thinks heathenry is too compartmentalised, so that's why he champions the word or the term 'Nordic animism'. Because he wants to, certainly in Scandinavia and he likes that it's being used outside of Europe, these symbols and Nordic heritage, as a modern, progressive set of symbols, a system of communication, about certain values and interests, like nature and the past. He likes that normal people would use that.

So he often uses the example of, say, like what the British were doing in the Victorian period. So they kind of re-invented Christmas, and one of the reasons was Prince Albert. German, was he? So they brought in the Christmas tree as, which I believe was a German tradition. And that became part of British Christmas tradition. You know that's communication. That's symbolism there, right? Whereas now I think that there's a lot of heathens that assume that the Christmas tree is almost like an extension of Yggdrasil. Which is cool. I like that idea. Not sure if it's historically true and accurate, but does that matter? Like we were going back before. About having the right to believe things, and making new symbols out of the past.

I think that is an exciting prospect that we should all, as heathens, we should all endeavour to debate. And to seriously what symbols we're using and what it is that we're communicating. Because we have to understand not what we're communicating to each other. But how we are being perceived from the outside. And if you are constantly using esoteric symbols like the Vegvisir. And you are communicating, I would argue, something occult, as in you are communicating that to the wider society... If you are communicating the Thor's hammer, you are communicating a symbol of – potentially – of militant aggression or macho aggression. But if you're communicating a tree, what is it you're communicating? You're communicating something quite different, with quite a different tone.

### 18:43 Rich

You know that's a really interesting point as to... It is not just how these symbols mean something within heathenry. But particularly in the terms of branding: what that's going to mean, sort of, in the broader... I've used this on this podcast before, the idea of the pagan-adjacent community?

### 19:00 Ross

Yeah. Yeah, I like that.



### 19:01 Rich

People who like the, the idea of pagan... They're, they're never going to go to a ritual, but they often have very strong opinions on what paganism is. Even though they're not part of the community, which I find fascinating but also very annoying.

### 19:14 Ross

It's true.

### 19:16 Rich

Well, yeah. But, but you think that the people who might go to Stonehenge... But they're not hippies and they're not into paganism. They like the idea of there being a Stonehenge. Or they might go to all these standing stones, might even do a tour of them. 'Are you doing this for religious reasons?' 'Well no, I'm just really into them.' And they might not have any reasoning beyond. The people who tie ribbons to trees in certain places, and cause actual ecological damage. Though they're coming from a good place, but the things that they're tying are non-biodegradable. So essentially it's just rotting and killing the tree, which is the opposite of what the intent was originally. Again it's coming back to this point of education and lack of understanding. But there is a certain will there, to sort of get involved, but not sort of grasp what it is.

### 19:59 Ross

I use the word 'heathenish' in an academic article that I did on Instagram girls that were involved in, like, we were talking about, like, this make-up. The runic make-up or the *Senua's Sacrifice* make-up. They play around with stuff. I was aware of it during the article, but I was also made aware of it after the article. Because a number of academics and heathens approached me and said they thought I was almost pandering to these girls. That they thought they were ridiculous individuals. And that's kind of what came out in the article as well, that these girls felt like that.

But when I talked to them, and tried to convey through the article, was that they were really interested in symbols. And interested in communicating things through the visual media. So as a scientist, a social scientist, I was trying to reserve my judgement. Because yeah, in a lot of cases I thought it was a load of... You know, I'm saying this off the record, although it's on the record. It's a little bit naff in some respects, shallow or something like that. But the evidence that I had as an academic when talking to them doesn't match with the prejudice that I had. The evidence that I have was them saying: 'I spend this amount of time reading about it. These are the books.' I'm seeing in some cases they were books that I'd never heard heathens talk about. So they were better educated on the Old Religion.

And like you said, Rich, they were kind of heathen adjacent. So they were aware of the modern heathen movement. And in some cases they were... I guess, if you wanted to be insulting about it. They were milking the heathen fandom for their accounts. I think they were respectful of it. I think heathen adjacent, in some ways were kind of parallel to heathenry. Because they were, we've said before, there are a lot of atheist heathens.

How do you define heathenry if it's not even a religion? Because if that's the case, if you've got heathen adjacent people, who are very educated, educating themselves, and playing around with our symbols as a means of expression. And they have a spiritual interest in this as well - not so





much that they believe in the gods. But that they believe in connecting to nature and the earth. And that is why they do an image of themselves, a romantic image of themselves in the snow, where they're wearing this runic make-up. I think that is a completely valid, and from an academic point of view, very interesting community or scenario. Because there's lots of them doing that. There's lots of them feeling spiritual using heathen type symbols and communicating heathen adjacent information.

And often to heathens that are subscribing to these Instagram accounts, and its constructive communication as well. I think, I think it's nice, a lot of the things that they're putting out there. And if you don't like it, and you think that Instagram girls are ridiculous, then fine. You know? I don't see it as a negative thing. I find some of what they are doing inspirational. And it clearly inspires a lot of people who are subscribing to these channels. So as a heathen community we can't just say, these people are doing it wrong. Or, how dare they when they're not believers.

It's a loop, it's a feedback loop, and it's part of the branding, to go back to that. It's a positive and constructive branding, using the brand of pagan adjacent symbols or symbols that are directly taken from our religious heritage. You're on very tricky ground when you're saying these girls or women are idiots. Or they don't have a right to do what they're doing when you've got heathens who are atheists. These are spiritual women with very good education, in some cases, on historical heathen symbols. Who are giving something positive to some heathens that are subscribing to their accounts. And then you've got people in our own community accepted as heathens, who don't even believe in the gods. It's a very tricky situation.

I think we need to have more conversations about what we're responsible for, communicating to each other and to the outside. And that's something that comes up within my work with Inform. That they'll ask us: 'Okay, what is being communicated here? Are they communicating to each other? Are they trying to communicate something to us?' So when you get vandalism, what is it that they are communicating with this symbol? Is it a threat? Are they communicating something threatening? It's a very interesting and complex topic.

### 24:55 Rich

To build on what you said there, Ross. I think that if you were able to revisit that, or do an update to that article that you wrote, which is very interesting. But I think if you were to look at something like TikTok, be even harder to study in terms of finding the sources. There's a multiplicity of voices. Which is how it works but in the times, the few times that I've been on there. Although it's downside is also it's strength. You get like a million voices with sort of like multiple niche opinions on heathenry. And you get some silly ones and some very serious, you know, very constructive ones.

But its interesting that because there's this vast sort of network, bad information does travel on it. Sure. But equally, when somebody does something terrible, or, is, is, um, I want to say cancelled. But is, you know, if there is something Völkisch or whatever, that information also tends to feed very rapidly through that network as well. And in terms of inclusivity from all sides it's potentially very positive. There are heathens on there who aren't on Instagram, who aren't on Facebook, who are... They might be on Twitch, but that's about it. You know, but that, that is the extent of their media interaction.



Interestingly I've been speaking to people under 20 on some Discord servers, who don't even watch television or movies. You know, they watch YouTube. But, you know, it's not a matter of saying: 'Oh, they don't know stuff from the eighties or nineties.' No, they watch no television. 'If it's not on YouTube, I don't watch it.' That's a small number of people at the moment. But that's, it's certainly significant that... I've spoken to at least five or ten people to whom that applies to in various different places. And that implies a very different perception of symbols and how you're seeing things. Because if you're not seeing the *Vikings* TV series, or you're not seeing that, you're only seeing depictions on TikTok, depictions on Instagram, that's going to have a much deeper impact than somebody who listens to a lot of metal and sees all the symbols there.

### 26:57 Ross

Yeah, and this goes back to what I was saying about heathens being victims. That we're... In our community we're victims of certain associations. We're victims of the narrative and the dialogue we have in the community. 'Cause a lot of it has historical and modern historical baggage. So one of the reasons why I think I am supportive of these so-called 'e-girls' and what they're doing on Instagram and TikTok and stuff, is that it's meaning something to a demographic. Which we really need in the heathen community.

So a lot of people our generation, Rich, got into heathenry. Certainly when I did in the nineties, my way into heathenry was black metal. And I was really into Varg Vikernes, you know. I was thirteen, fourteen and I thought it was awesome that he was murdering and burning churches. I thought he was really fucking cool. Obviously that's a little bit embarrassing now. And as I've grown up as a member of society, I don't condone murder and arson on an ethical level. And you change over time. I think a lot of heathens came into heathenry through the Bro-halla stuff. Through maybe the *Vikings* TV series, or *Wardruna*, or even maybe the Margull films.

And that's okay. As long as we as a community we help them, and filter them through a system of knowledge. A system of symbols, and of information and meaning, that we have in our community. So that they become educated, so what they joined the community for, which was depth. And to give their lives more meaning, and to give them more knowledge about historical heathendom. And I think that's what's happening with Instagram and TikTok. Yes, it might seem silly. But that's probably because a lot of heathens are macho guys who are a little bit older. Who think that these are silly little girls. But at the same time, most heathens, even the macho Völkisch heathens, quite like the idea of young women coming into heathenry. So you can't have it both ways.

And you don't have to like... I don't like *Wardruna*. I mean, I like Einar Selvik on a personal level, and he's very knowledgeable about the past. But I don't like his music. And I don't like the way he expresses it, and that's, that's fine. And I don't like a lot of the people that have come into heathenry who listen to his music. But most people, heathens that I know, don't like Instagram heathen girls or heathenish, heathen adjacent Instagram girls. But what is being communicated, as I say, is not a bad thing, when you think about the meaning. And that it's coming from a position, in many cases, of knowledge and research.

And who is it being communicated to? It is inspiring and communicating to a lot of young people. As you say, who might not have access to other media, or wilfully not be influenced by other media. And if they then join the heathen community, or are heathen adjacent to the rest of their lives, that's okay. Because that's gonna change. Just like it changed from me being, thinking 'Varg





Vikeness was cool', you know. I now do something completely different thirty years on. That could be the case with TikTokers. You've got a fourteen-year-old girl in Texas who thinks it's really cool with these nineteen-year-old French girls being kind of Nordic witchy on Instagram. In five years she might be a Gytha in Texas and set up a really important kindred. So we should be open to that depth of communication.

### 30:57 Rich

Absolutely. And the other thing I've noticed, certainly in terms of this podcast... And I don't know how much of this came out in your research. Is that in these newer online spaces, social media spaces that are far removed from Facebook, the numbers of pagans and heathens who are, you know, sort of, in LGBTQ, queer plus whatever you want to call it, would self-identify as that, in some spaces, fifty or sixty percent of the people there. Now whether that's just because they feel comfortable there, they can be safe online, I don't know. That's another sort of aspect, but certainly that's definitely part of it.

And certainly the people on TikTok... I've also seen an awful lot of the heathens or pagans who talk. Who'll do a little short video on how to do a ritual. Or how to set up an altar. Very simplistic stuff. Certainly identify within that community. And that again was gonna, without any use of symbols at all, was moving that whole conversations, moving in that direction. It's interesting that you say that the quote unquote 'Old School', I won't say Völkisch heathens, they have no response to that. Nothing.

### 32:05 Ross

Yeah, yeah, which is really fun I think. Well yeah, their response is the QAnon Shaman, right? That's their version, or that's the only real media expression that they've got for that. Yeah. I think that is a really lovely thing about the demographic that is changing. Because for many years you had a bunch of white metalheads in heathenry going: 'Oh well, we should really move away from the Völkisch stuff and the macho stuff. We need to bring in, you know, bring in People of Colour. And different sexual, and a different demographic. Different genders, as in not just one gender'. And now that's happening, that's happening in the younger generation. So when I was doing my Instagram research, I was doing some background research into similar studies. That had been done on social media that weren't necessarily anything to do with paganism.

But as you say, there seems to be a focus on spaces. Seems to me that younger people are more involved in being adjacent to supporting queer culture. There are a lot more younger people that are queer or pro-trans. So for instance I come from a very working class background, council estates, things like that. In Salford, it's a fairly poor area of Manchester. And when I was growing up in the nineties, it was... Although we had the Gay Village in Manchester, which has become even the official term for that Quarter. But it wasn't back in the nineties, it was impossible to talk about being gay. It was mind-blowing from my point of view, you know, how much things have changed in the last twenty years.

So I think that for me, as an individual trying to, as a man in his forties, white hetero guy, trying to understand the world, that affects the way that I understand heathenry. And the way I will, say, approach my research data. Why were these young heathen girls, or heathen adjacent girls, trying to be open-minded? Or at least trying to be aware of your own prejudices and where you come from, is essential in sociology. And as a heathen within the heathen community, we should



definitely be more... Not just open-minded and tolerant, I think that goes without saying. But we should perhaps be more willing to be fluid. And allow people to their own forms of communication, create their own forms of symbols.

So, as I say, it's generally in mainstream heathenry accepted that you can worship Loki as a trans person. Then by extension, shouldn't it be okay for a nineteen year old heathen girl to wear runic make-up and just to do her thing? Especially if she has thousands of followers. And she writes this little blurb under her TikTok saying 'hashtag Odin' or 'hashtag runic consciousness', or something like that, you know. Yeah, it might be shallow and silly, but is it really that bad? So what you're communicating, and to a new demographic, is really good. And if you want to get spiritual about it, maybe that's what the gods want. Who are you to stop people coming to worship the gods, and worshipping the gods in a certain way?

We should have these debates and conversations more. Because on one hand you might say: 'I'm speaking for the gods, and the gods don't want racists at their blots'. Okay. Maybe they don't. But equally I don't think they have a problem with an eighteen year old. Or a fourteen year old trans boy in Glasgow or Manchester worshipping or feeling spiritual in his room, using, using runes. Because he's in transit, he's in progress of learning more. Or deepening his, or her, or their relationship with life and reality and society. And these are things that for decades we've been saying we wanted for heathenry.

### 36:23 Jochem

Yeah.

### 36:24 Rich

Definitely. And I've been seeing this newer expression slowly coming into some of the larger groups offline. I mean, it's huge online. But that's always, real world space has always dragged behind it a little bit. Because that's just the nature of things. But as that gradually starts to affect real world things, it seems to be an extremely positive expression of things. And I think we will see... What the next generation holds will be fascinating, you know. Because I'm very much part of the... two generations, like yourself Ross. People who were fifteen, sixteen, seventeen getting into heathenry. You know, quite a long, long way removed from even how they perceive media. Let alone what we go and watch.

### 37:02 Ross

In terms of symbolism I don't know what the heathen community is going to do. I think that there are certain individuals that are trying to do more, in terms of bringing out the old religious symbols and to find innovative ways of using them. But those individuals tend to be older, white males. There is a... You know, as an older white male myself I don't know what the heathen adjacent demographic is doing with symbols. You know that's not, obviously in my, that's not within my social group. I don't hang out with a lot of sixteen year old girls on the internet, you'll be glad to know.

But the ones that I've spoken to when I've done my research... Certainly the nineteen year old girls on Instagram that I did... That I spoke to in my research, they seem to be using language, or using a language in a way that I a) didn't understand, but b) couldn't have predicted. And, that is exciting to me, as a heathen. I just don't know where that is going. And I think it's still not entirely the way I



would have wanted. Or the way I would have chosen to communicate the past. And I'm not sure what the level of education is going to be like in the heathen community in the next ten, fifteen years. So, we'll see. One of the reasons that it might be dangerous... Not necessarily of the anti-social situation that we've had for the last ten, fifteen, twenty years, with the Völkisch issue.

But one things that might be dangerous within the mainstream, progressive heathenry and their use of symbols, is a lack of depth. Still being susceptible to information warfare online and a lack of academic sources online. I do think that online life is going to become more essential and more obvious to the younger generation in their reality. So we also have... As the heathen community we also have to adapt to the idea that being a solitary online heathen is a perfectly valid future for the heathen religion. That maybe you don't need to be in the woods with a bunch of other people at a blot to be heathen. Maybe that's not the future of heathenry. I don't know.

#### 39:44 Rich

Yes, I think that you're absolutely right, I'd certainly concur with a lot of that Ross. And thank you very much for being our guest.

#### 39:49 Ross

Thank you, it's been very enjoyable.

#### 39:52 Rich

I feel as if we've only just scratched the surface of this topic. We may have to have you back on again, once we all start our TikTok accounts perhaps.

#### 39:59 Ross

I'm going to have to learn how to twerk first, I think. [Laughter]

#### 40:02 Rich

Possibly, possibly.

#### 40:05 Jochem

I would like to thank you both for this two part episode, it was very interesting indeed. In our next episode we will discuss online spaces versus physical gatherings in heathenry with our special guest, Sif. It promises to be another interesting episode, so please join us next time. Bye Bye.

#### 40:25 Ross

Bye bye, thank you.

#### 40:26 Rich

Bye.

#### 40:28 Jochem

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