

Volkmar J. Ellmauthaler

# *An Argument for Naturism*

Essay  
On the Freedom of the Heart



edition T

Ein Argument für  
Naturismus  
Versuch  
über die Freiheit

# *Von der Kultur des Natürlichen*

Volkmar J. Ellmauthaler

edition T



*An Argument for Naturism*

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German.

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*An Argument for Naturism*



And He said,  
Who told thee that thou wast naked?  
(1 Mose 3.11)



I

Pureness and intimacy

At our first acquaintance – after a three-month correspondence – we found a nearby lake to take an evening swim. Foreseeingly unprepared, we ended up in the nude. Later enjoyed many other things we had in common: one was writing, naturism another.

As soon as the approach to such a “natural-mindedness“ is consistent with one’s lifestyle, philosophy and the general “nature“ of both, we may call them *Children of Fortune*. – After 25 years, we may say it has been proved true: we are Children of Fortune!

William Shakespeare might have called us *loving, happy, gay* – in his Sonnets we can find an unreached ambiguity playing with vailed / un- / re-vailed, nature and – well, yes: also sexuality. Recalling Sonnet XX:

**A** Womans face with natures owne hand painted,  
Haste thou the Master Mistris of my passion,  
A womans gentle hart but not acquainted  
With shifting change as is false womens fashion,  
An eye more bright then theirs, lesse false in rowling:  
Gilding the obiect where-vpon it gazeth,  
A man in hew all *Hews* in his countrowling,  
Which steales mens eyes and womens soules amaseth,  
And for a woman wert thou first created,  
Till nature as she wrought thee fell a dotinge,  
And by addition me of thee defeated,  
By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.

Shakespeare: Complete Works. Facsimile. – Quotation: Oxford Edition, London University Press, 1971, pg. 1108. ISBN: 0 19 254101 3 (first published in 1905).

*A woman's face with nature's own hand painted, hast thou the Master Mistris of my passion... and for a woman wert thou first created...* singing this, we get a hint of the basic things in life: "Naturism"; nature-bound feelings of a *creature*. – Shakespeare puts it straight: A (*pure*) face is being painted by *nature's own hand*. Pureness, to purify, *being created pure* in terms of *clean and (still?!) untouched*, are constantly emerging from off-stage. Sonnet CX, the closing rhyme, reads:

**Then give me welcome, next my heaven the best,  
Even to thy pure and most most loving breast.**

How come, then, opponents to naturism keep insinuating, naturists might give up "intimacy" and "decency" for, and even more so: "presenting" their sexuality to the public?

What is: "decent"? Do naturists abandon their clothes together with morality, decency, intimacy?

Well, most probably not. Naturists won't. Would nudists do? We don't. – We simply know different behaviour while acting in a hopefully decent way, and keeping intimate aspects untouched. Naturists hardly give up privacy while staying naked. They are trying to be and stay part of nature – nudists, more or less, focus on their “staying undressed“. Both would never flick a cigarette out of a car, nor allow patriotic litter left on a silent moon or mars.

Some initial questions should be asked, though:

At first: What does “decency“ mean, or “intimacy“?

Decency derives from Latin, *decentia*, -ae, f., the corresponding verb is *deceō*, 2., -cui (with *decor*, *decus*): 1. decorate, dress up, be convenient, suitable (to suit – the suit), 2. be decent, act or behave decently, in a respectful manner towards others.

One might fantasize a certain order of precedence: He (or she), by adequately following a dress-code, will be accepted as “decent“: suitable, acceptable – even if this person might only be dressed up “neatly“. Naturists, however, would go one significant step further, by asking for the “qualities behind the cloak“.

The question may be asked: Does the neat appearance of an individual really correspond with the ethical qualities we are hoping to find in a person or, even more so, within a society? Can any form of “ranking by submission“ provide any society with these sound qualities in *well-accepted*, *honourable members* the respective society might call their desirable standard?

To our belief, this hardly is the case: People are endangered to take “submission“ for “morality“. Submission is easy to get, a

moral-, better say: ethics-orientated life is something more difficult to achieve. This might be crucial for the fruitful development of any society. Some others might keep referring to “religion“ – turning out to be the final step into an “immunized“ form of a *principles- and conviction-orientated* argumentation: ***Commandments, then, beat arguments.***

Second question: What is “*shame*“? – a form of being sinful or, as suggested by Irenaeus Eibl-Eibesfeldt, hereditary “*shyness*“?

Shame, most familiar a term, dates back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Europe’s Gothic period. Its origin may derive from the ancient nordic “skam“, Old-High-English “sceand“ for “disgrace“, this being correlated with “sceamu“, “skome“, and, as a reflective verb: “skaman“ for to be, or feel, ashamed. “Modesty“, then, will point back to the Latin *modus*, -i, m (related to *medeor*, *ēri* – help, alleviate) in the meaning of tactfulness, the right measure, also: a well-shaped melody, good proportions; from: *modulus*, -i, m – the measure, also: moderation. Shame, as a restrictive term, is pointing on certain frameworks given, trespasses inadmissible.

Conservative translations and interpretations of the Holy Bible even use “shame“ as a synonym for the human sexual parts:

In 1. Moses 3.21, the Lord is about to point Eve and Adam away from Paradise, as they have just been trespassing His one and only (symbolic) restriction, as willing to be of His, the Lord’s, same nature. Symbol is the picking of “a fruit“ from a forbidden tree. As a good father, the Lord provides them with some loin-cloth, made of an animal’s skin. – Are they meant to cover their nude parts only in consequence of a sin they should be ashamed of?, like ill-treated children should do, after perhaps having been

caught while enjoying early “Doctor’s games“? Or: Is the scene rather free of punishment, as the Lord is sending, better: releasing two pre-adults to the various responsibilities of grown-ups?

Why stays “being ashamed“ linked to our “sexual parts“, which, in early childhood, have not even got their final function, yet? Can we interpret this *weak- and sinfulness of the body* a meaningful misinterpretation by reactionary translators?, an argumentative vehicle perhaps, welcome to the Roman Catholic clergy throughout the centuries until present, in order to keep their flocks under control? Must we, evermore, consider our flesh – body – sexuality and spirits surrendered to weakness and sin?, to the Devil? – What is a sin or the Evil? If not weakness of *the flesh*, is it arbitrariness? Are we “at the mercy“ of ... whom?

Dr.<sup>in</sup> Ruth Lapide<sup>1</sup>, the wise lady, keeps emphasizing the mentioned “loincloth“ being knitted by the Lord from the hair (or skin) of an animal. The major commandment in this context is: *Never kill an animal for an unjustified reason*. Apart from the Egyptian, Greek, Roman and even Jewish manner of sacrificing animals to various Gods, the contemporary believers would be allowed to kill animals for a sacrifice and their own nutrition, trespassers would be considered murderers under God’s eyes.

We are pointing on the “duty of taking care“ which, as being humans, we have to follow, including the entire creation – the world, our surroundings in modern terms. According to the Jewish, Christian and Muslim culture, every last-born member of society is chosen to take care of those who are entrusted to him (or: her, in terms of present parlance). This, again, strictly correlates with the ancient Roman principle of PATER FAMILIAS.



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