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Essay

On the Protection of Naturism

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1. Approach

The administrative development in one of the largest associations had developed favorably until 2016, after which disputes and objected ballots occurred. In 2017, the author was invited to contribute to the protection of naturism and proposed an Ethics Council to be established. – Cooperation with the Legal Council was agreed. The aspect of scientificity was ensured by the broad scientific competence of all members of the Ethics Council and their offer to cooperate with everyone who would contribute seriously. The congress agreed. A crisis developed in the aftermath, escalating by the author's resignation by 2019, amidst a series of three resignations from Board. – Ethics unfortunately had to give way to the power politics of certain individuals. An independent Ethics Council remains highly recommendable.

In the meantime, Dr. Ellmauthaler offers full service independently in his office. Operational language is English, despite the traditional three language framework within the roof-organization. A new, competent Board elected, the Ethics Council may be reestablished at the same range, independently, as is agreed for the Legal Council. Independence in terms of scientific content and Ethics-related actions must be granted, whereas the respective board members remain subject to democratic procedures.

2. The major task of the Ethics Council

was more or less fundamental: **The protection of Naturism.**

Special tasks were corresponding with three major fields:

1. Internals:

- Elaborating the basis for benevolent communication
- Conflict settlement: amical treatment and resolution
- Radical renewal of the highest governing bodies
- Coordination of international scientific studies
- Promotion and improvement of cooperation,

2. Philosophy, as a partner to Jurisdiction and Social Sciences:

- Comments on Ethical issues
- Identification and determination of requirements and potentials to define and protect „Naturism“
- Consideration and discussion of pathways aiming the requested, finally agreed, goal,

3. Politics – on the levels of society and clubs:

- Reaction on local offences, or international accusations
- Co-ordination of proposals on adequate reactions
- On invitation: participation in the discussion of Ethics; on indispensable matter, such as the protection of nature: ecology, species; renunciation of over-exploitation.

3. The situation at start – in retrospection

Apart from all principally restricted resources, we find it appropriate to ask applicable questions and find valuable answers. Not only should the substance of Ethics be investigated, but furthermore, what our future understanding of Naturism could be.

Ethics grants Naturism the right to exist – its raison d'être.

The principle of *asking fundamental questions* should be all Naturists' right and reasonable duty. Like that, we, the Naturists, are capable of maintaining interpretive sovereignty over our own, essence-forming terms, which has reached major importance within a presently weakened thinking-, question-, and argumentation culture that seemingly allows anybody to claim anything, as long as the claim is spread as aggressively as possible and in endless loops or specifically designed bubbles. Media seem predestined for this. Therefore, they are currently abused in an almost frivolous way as a plaything of ideological dominance strategies. The reinterpretation of well-known concepts and language rules – yes, also of recognized “truths“ in “alternative truths“ – may be mentioned here. However, once a term has been reinterpreted, its original meaning can hardly be re-gained nor saved. – The concept of “nature” has long been damaged: how come? Because of ignorant self-exculpation.

“Naturism”, among naturists being used insufficiently clear, may thus represent almost anything – between occasional sunbathing *clothing optional* and Greenpeace actions against commercial whaling – between “Schreber”-garden-like clubs, *clothing optional*, or some cheerful-adolescent nudist demos in front of the catholic cathedral of *Sagrada Família* in Barcelona: *clothing op-*

tional, again, as even with public proven nude actions, the principle of arbitrariness is repeatedly followed – with great naivety,... because new rationalizations are being invented on demand in both the naturist club and official demo area: why here, now, why not, at all... it should be an individual's free decision whether to stay completely or partially dressed – or undressed.

The right of validating Naturism for each other in a binding manner, has long been denied, or at least undermined: The pornographic industry, including mafia-like structures, which gain financial benefits from sexuality and many kinds of prudish pleasure, use Naturism and Nudism in various contexts, as well as in the manipulative metatext of their egalitarian self-presentation.

A lack of contradiction, however, makes apply what others do.

The community of all those people who respect nature and see themselves as *part of nature*, has the task of being a role model, and to designate coherent behavior in appropriate terms. – Consequently, the following questions must be asked: What is “naturist” in the behavior of naked people? What is “pure”, “sexual”, “sexualized” with unclothed human beings? Has a person who goes unclothed a “message” during the encounter? If yes, to whom? Can Naturism by itself be taken as a “concept”? Can Naturism be ignored or arbitrarily re-interpreted as one in thousands of “-isms”? Who forms and offers a valid regulation from now on? Who could advise on a naturist language and behavioral norm? Any outsider, perhaps, with unknown self-interests? Or should we prefer to, rather helplessly, wait for some *Mr. Trump's* tweets to find out what we are, or might be *allowed* to be, to consider, say or do, in the future?

3. From the actual to the target: an issue with delegating

Unfortunately, we cannot divulge the most burning questions to individuals or to the Quorum of the Ethics Council. Questions, concepts and answers belong to the “Holy Grail” of all nature-loving people, that means: to them all, and each one: to us.

What can be delegated, are parts of research and thought, the results of which can be perceived, re-interpreted, discussed and reflected back, freely, collegially among all of us, with great empathy. It is only in the following steps, that something like a commonly accepted norm, a system of existing language rules and behaviours may emerge, which we may call “Naturism”.

The more or less politically desired “protection of Naturism” is thus a task that, first of all, commits naturists to ask each other, and consequently realize. – The Ethics Council can coordinate, point to thinking and formulation problems, and sometimes become active on their own. Cooperation and the working-through of conflicts have an important function for the benefit and prosperity of the “general public” within the Naturist community.

What is often practiced today, is a search for the “strong hand” everywhere. – As a matter of fact, particularly mentally disturbed individuals, from a special form of hubris promptly offer their own “strong hand”. This applies to state policy as well as to fiscal policy and the various machinations of global elites. – The phenomenon of individuals or groups identifying with their powerful protagonists, often male, merge with the basic identification mechanisms in large groups [also see: Freud, Sigmund: “Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego” (1921)].

Dangerously often, an individual or a significant group decides on conceptual meanings and behaviours – in this way forms a “We”-feeling and thus manages to set the “Self” in contradiction to the “Other”, henceforth “Enemy”.

The compellingly positive feeling of *belonging to the strong man* or *group* overwhelms the remnants of existing critical faculty. Also, wherever criticism is penned as “hostile”, the ranks of elites close *in opposition to the enemies*. This dynamic is currently being found in many parts of the world, leaving many of us feeling unfree and angry. The potential for anger is always directed against avowed enemies and contributes to the uncritical acknowledgment of one's own entity, often in the guise of a “Fuehrer” – leader. Wherever such leaders come to power through democratic elections, the situation becomes fatal; however, this applies in principle to all parties involved: Not only rules one – often psychologically stigmatized – leader over basic norms, but finally begins to establish the elitist “We” *in counter-dependence to the enemy*.

Herein lies – one should not sigh with relief – the germ of self-destruction of those in power. Is the enemy demolished or fatally destroyed, the foundation of their own self-definition will crumble and finally fail. Such groupings, up to state formations, eventually could die from the lack of outbound justification of their own existence. Prior to that, unrestrained brutal confrontations may occur, that may escalate in the form of (stellar) wars, in a *loose-lose situation* of the complete annihilation of all parties. But because again other elites detect their own chances just in radical destruction and, in consequence, the profitable reconstruction, such carnage can rarely be stopped. Hence this principle bears tragic consequences for all.

5. Consequences for Naturists

People around the world are sometimes unclothed – not necessarily from poverty. Nudity by scarcity, on the other hand, is often superseded, due to fear. Few have made a naked life their norm. *Prophets* seek confrontation, *diplomats* conflict avoidance, *leaders* try to use every temporary uncertainty in order to enforce their own views in the vacuum created; *the majority* shows no inner convictions. This approach tells us: There is a chaotic situation we have to master *together*. This can be achieved by renouncing emotion, with appreciative benevolent cooperation and a fair amount of pragmatism. But as it turns out, even within the institution – like in any large group – there are clear signs of agitation from individual protagonists within various regional and supra-regional groupings that communicate well amongst each other, but also against others, aiming innovations, or by enforcing changes.

That alone is not fundamentally wrong. What must be avoided, is any sole legal claim to the correctness of one single party's own thoughts, words, programs, deeds. What should be criticized, is any form of attempted or demonstrated power constellation *in opposition to others* who seek to live and bring in further suggestions or concepts.

The Ethics Council was terminated by 2019.

What should make ourselves, as Naturists, “free” in the strictest meaning of the word, can only be the result of open debates, not the mere self-display of elitist groups, their leaders or their singular concepts. If such tendencies become apparent, they have to be re-directed to the consensual discourse.

Anyone who wants to be accepted as a “source of ideas” will discuss the own contributions with others and occasionally present the results to larger committees. Unfavorable are actionist, or other, approaches “by surprise“. Deterrent to healthy development are also quasi-political moves for the purpose of influencing the overall system. “Politics”, in naturism, is meant to serve the organization, sometimes named “movement”.

In fact desirable are collectively conceived and accepted proposals that serve a matter, not primarily the protagonist. Then they will serve and benefit the overall project.

The beets are subject to the crop change, while the field itself is meant to continue existing and remain fertile.

6. Preliminary Outlook

This can be considered through an example:

[Save the Whales, Humans!](#)

By the end of 2018, the Japanese government spread their intention to withdraw from the International Whaling Commission, as did the United States from various political alliances. Japan is taking a path of solipsism that has evidently become bearable. Commercial whaling might be re-introduced without restriction, at least according to their own specifications the world should accept undoubtedly.

Whaling as a term seems harmless at first glance, above all it has been in use for generations and is accepted as such. *Commercial* – as a single term – stands for global, profit-oriented progress, and appears positively connoted. Also the *combination of both terms* seems to be acceptable. The concrete project involved is

the technically perfected, systematic, yet futile killing of *mammals like we are*, that rank highest on the list of endangered species.

Whales are not one's "enemies". Still: What happens as soon as they all will have been killed?

What occurs in hardly any commercial semantics, are *alternatives*. Goals, once formulated, are considered *alternativeless*. To criticize such goals, or to oppose those by alternatives, from that very moment is considered as disloyal, hostile, harmful indeed, and is – by simple followers lacking wide horizons – opposed consistently and quite emotionally. The sources of such emotions may well be seen in “early childhood traumata”, which can be over-compensated, even channelled for a mental balance. A statement, *we consider* or, *we share the intention*, must always be understood as a *test run*. If not countered with consistency and conclusive reasoning from several directions, the action will follow. – To hope for Greenpeace in the aftermath, whose activists might likely return to actions from powerboats in a breakneck manner, to hinder whaling fleets on the high seas, as they did many years ago, would be extremely cynical and might provide shattering insights into the long-standing decadence of the undecided.

The example shows, in terms of Naturism: All are called upon living Naturism by themselves, to fill the term with life and provide all the greyish-cruel prescriptions of self-appointed, or elected, potentates with lovingly colored blots. Colors mean creativity, vibrancy. Nature.

Naturism is endangered by commercial elites. – Naturism can save Nature, and ourselves, as *co-creatures*. As we protect our “Naturism”, we may preserve that little space of “World”.