

Functioning in a specific society , the mechanism of maintenance of the Mainstream --as proposed above--can function as a anti-democratic process, despite legislative efforts and reforms efforts . If there is a dialectical relation between the educational , the political , the sociocultural and the economical systems , as Fägerlind and Saha assert, policy , standards , priorities and perspectives and predominance have a direct and deep influence on the formulation of goals, objectives and practices in each of the spheres . It is proposed that by analyzing the distribution of power and influence in society, it is possible to draw conclusions on the Undertow in operation in society.

In Sweden , to be specific , there is a dual educational system in operation...in which boys and girls are physically present within one and the same comprehensive system but receive two distinctively different educations. The mechanisms of the Undertow in Sweden are proposed to be: Sociocultural Authoritarianism, economic parameters of normalcy and the political ideology of Jämlikhet .

"The Reign of Testicles"

Hjordis Levin, a Swedish historian , has described development in Sweden since 1800, attempting to trace the turn for the better for women in Sweden which Kate Millett saw in the U. S. A. in the form of a counter revolution , starting in the 60's in the emergence of a new feministic movement and a homosexual movement. (Levin 1989, 11) To this end, Levin has studied the development of the feminist movement and the development of the movement for sexual liberation . She questions Millett on several points, but for the purposes of this paper, only one point will be dealt with here. Levin makes a distinction between feminists and what she calls sexual liberals. On the one hand , she sees those who strived for women's emancipation and , on the other hand , she sees those who strived for sexual freedom. In her book, Levin makes a case for what she sees a deep conflicts between feminists and sexual liberals during nearly the whole period spanning the years 1830-1930 , and she attributes to these conflicts the surge of a sexual reform movement which contributed to the decline of the feminist movement in 1920-30 .(Levin 1989: 11) Of primary importance in Levin's analysis is the question which gave rise to her research and the answer which she found, as a result of her research:

What is wrong with sexual liberation, bringing about , as it does, so many things which displease us women? Historical research revealed the answer that the battle for sexual liberation has not been led by women, but has been led by men in the interests of men. Those advantages, if there are any, which we women have won, have occurred despite sexual liberation not thanks to it. (Levin 1989: 306)

Why, one might ask, have men led the battle for sexual liberalism? Levin provides this answer:

The development of the industrial society and the victory of technology was an advantageous environment in which the idea of the human being seen as a machine could develop. Sade's literary figures are fucking machines constructed out of living human beings. Ellis and Freud solved sexual liberalism's dilemma: how to make sexual emancipation compatible with sexual slavery. If women *want* to be hurt, hurting women will not constitute a crime against the principle of freedom. ...By use of the theory of women's masochistic nature, the violence which men would otherwise direct at the political and economic system and each other if deprived of the possibility of directing it at women, was re-directed (at women). (Levin 1987)

1989

By assigning women the role of victim and men the role of victimizer, De Sade expounded the natural right of men to make use of all and any women they chose for the fulfillment of pleasure., explaining that in nature there are no moral rules, only the rights which man can claim as his own through the use of his superior physical strength. Levin states:

"That which the Victorians, and especially the Victorian feminists, began their battle to combat was the consequences of this sadistic view of human natureBy legalizing pornography, the sexual privileges of the aristocracy were democratized—the same privileges which had been the object of criticism and the political weapon used by the bourgeois and working classes in the mid 19th century to combat the aristocracy. Freud and Ellis have been of assistance as they have made the old aristocratic privileges a little more polite, acceptable and compatible with the doctrines of freedom and equality expounded by the bourgeois and the working class. Sade did not mince words. The victimizer and the victim were the expressions he used. This specification is not possible in a democratic society which renounces all theories of victimization. There are no abusers and no abused, no victimizers and victims any longer. There are just two equal partners, one who revels in tormenting and one who revels in being tormented." (Levin 1989:303)

Whether or not one agrees with Levin's analysis of Swedish history or the development she has traced from De Sade to Freud and Ellis to present day pornography in Sweden is not the point. The point is, rather, is Levin's analysis a feasible explanation for the resurgence of violence in society, aimed at women and children? Why did her book cause such a negative reaction? Is it possible that this is a topic which is taboo? How does Levin's analysis fit into the dominant feminist theories in Sweden? If Levin is right, the ideal of jämlikhet becomes problematic. Perhaps, her analysis causes even chaos in feministic theories, themselves? Is it possible that the form which feministic theory has taken in Sweden during the years since the downfall of Feminism is the result of male steering also, just as sexual liberation was? The role of work in the lives of women has long been essential in Feministic theory in Scandinavian. If this is the result of the importance allotted participation in the labor force by the general "cultural climate" in the Nordic countries or not is a question which deserves more attention than it can receive here. Briefly, it is considered to be a partial result of the restricted space given to Feministic discourse within the official arena. Whatever the source, however, the priority given to the labor market perspective has posed problems, not only for Feministic theory, but for women themselves, both individually, economically and as objects of research.

One can almost hear the unarticulated sigh which seems to accompany Karin Widerberg's words:

" Women appear as sexless as they participate in all their different activities. They work and work, as if we women lived only for the love of working." (Widerberg 1987: 60)

Can the form which feministic theory in Sweden has taken during the years in question be a result of the fact that it has taken place in those "spaces" which were socially and politically acceptable and even beneficiary—which were, in fact, the only spaces allowed?

Sweden, which in many respects has been regarded as being in the forefront of the development of educational and equality policies, shares the sex-segregated pattern in education, work force and public life in spite of extensive and consistent reforms. This is puzzling since politicians and planners have regarded education as a "spear-head for future society", in which everybody was supposed to share the social, economic and cultural benefits offered by an expansive society. (Elgquist-Saltzman 1991: 61)

And, yet, one question still seems to remain unanswered.

is sexual liberalism the work of men? Did deep conflicts exist between sexual liberals and feminists during 1830-1930? Did feminism lose the battle definitely in the 1930's? Perhaps "The War against Women" is and always has been the same war, waged with the same weapon? Perhaps "Backlashes" have not occurred, as Susan Faludi defines them? Can the story of women's sexual emancipation be seen as the story of sexual manipulation and exploitation? Is sexual liberalism all that it's made out to be? Or is it one of the "lies...unfathomable smokescreens ...compromises.." or "controversial truths" of which Ofstad speaks?

If de Sade was right when he stated that "every time you deny him the chance to give vent to this portion of despotism, which nature has vested in his heart, he will be obliged to resort to practicing it on those objects which surround him, and he will practice unrest in the State.", then it is no wonder that "The Hollow Men" regarded women and children, being as they are a relatively powerless group, a small sacrifice to make for the Greater Good: the stability of the State, economic expansion and the maintenance of the social order.

Levin proposes that a new patriarchy emerged : "The new male reign which grounds its power not primarily on "raw strength" but on manipulation, sexual theories and scientific evidence for female "särart".(Levin 1987)

1989 ?

I am inclined to agree. The next question is, however, how does it work. ? Shortly, the following is proposed. There is a dialectical relationship between the different systems in society. (Fägerlind & Saha 1989) Despite reform efforts and legislative measures, equality for women in Sweden has not been achieved. Instead the situation for women in Sweden is characterized by segregation, hierarchy and responsibility. Segregation is assisted by the sexually neutral ideology of Jämlikhet, which renders a consensual facade to a deep existential conflict in Sweden, functioning as a political manipulation, through the bureaucratization and neutralization of feminism. Control through the agency of state funding, incorporation of feminists in all political parties in Sweden and the party-political demands made for the prevalence of party-political loyalties —at all costs..

The physical responsibility for Hearth and Home and the moral responsibility for children which is given women is helped and abetted by a sociocultural Authoritarianism, which lends credence to scientific evidence for theories on "kvinnlig särart" and simultaneously restricts the critical climate, defining what may be said, written, done and thought in society and what may not, what is appropriate and what is inappropriate and leaving no room/space or forum for criticism in the public arena.