

Abstract

Claes Ekenstam, *Kroppens idéhistoria: Disciplinering och karaktärsdanning i Sverige 1700-1950*. With an English summary: *The History of Ideas of the Body: Discipline and Character-formation in Sweden 1700-1950*. Dissertation in Swedish. The Departement of History of the Ideas and Science, University of Gotenburg. Gidlunds, Hedemora, 1993.

This dissertation is a historical study of how human beings are moulded by the attitudes that surround them as physical beings. Various disciplinary and character-formating practises are described and analysed, in relation to the intellectual, social and economic life of society. The study is based on prescriptive manuals concerning care of infants, rules of etiquette, and information on sexual matters.

An authoritarian attitude to the body existed in the 18th century, but the control of man was unspecific and partly inefficient. During the 19th century a more efficient and profound discipline evolves. The control of the body developes from external punishment and measures to internal, more mentally orientated self-control. The rationalization and distansing to the sponataneous processes of the body runs parallel with a physical and emotional separation between the individuals. The history of the body has also implied dissociation and sexualisation. The increased assesement of physical love during the 20th century is marred by a tendency to separate sexuality from other bodily functions and emotions.

From the 1930's onwards there are tendencies to develop discipline in more coplex and subtle forms, as well as minor efforts to settle with such ambitions. The results of my historical investigation are discussed in relation to the works of Michel Foucault and the studies of the Reichian psychoterapist Alexander Lowen.

Keywords: History of Ideas; Body; Power; Education; Sex-history; Child care; Carl von Linné (1707-1778); Nils von Rosenstein (1706-1773); Adolf Lichtenstein (1884-1950); Seved Ribbing (1845-1921); Anton Nyström (1842-1931); Alexander Lowen (1910-); Michel Foucault (1926-1984).