



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG  
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# AGONISTISK FEMINISM OCH FOLKLIG MOBILISERING

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## ABSTRACT

The thesis starts from a critical feminist perspective that stresses political relevance and emphasizes the importance of political change. Gender is here a complex variable within a discourse of 'folkbildning' with an explicit ambition to mobilize women's political commitment. In order to examine the performative dimension in a political culture, the dissertation seeks its place between gender studies, philosophical pedagogy and politics.

In the dissertation it is reflected upon how differences among women are negotiated, deconstructed and reconstructed within a polycultural, same-sex discourse of 'Bildung'. Focus is on conflicts (antagonisms) generated in a heterogeneous women's group brought about by making differences among women. By means of examples taken from a heterogeneous same-sex institution the potential of critical understanding and its relation to women's different experiences is examined.

A main theme is the complexity and the conflicts resulting from women's differences. This makes politics of identity, based on concepts of fixed categories and coherent stable identities, impossible, whether it concerns gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality or physical or psychological ability.

The thesis argues normatively for an 'agonistic feminism' which challenges value monism and which theoretically tries to combine Hannah Arendt's existential phenomenological interest in the human condition in the world with Chantal Mouffe's interest in radical and pluralistic democracy. The text particularly stresses Hannah Arendt's dialogical performative act in concert and Chantal Mouffe's agonistic dialogue as an expression of an agonistic model of action.

Through a radical political dimension of the concept 'Bildung', which to some extent can be explained by Chantal Mouffe's agonistic pluralism, Nira Yuval-Davis' transversal politics and bell hooks' transgressive teaching, the thesis argues that it is possible to constitute forms of power that are compatible with democratic values.

### KEY WORDS:

*Agonistic pluralism, antagonism, Bildung, differentiated solidarity, hegemony, conflictual consensus, organic intellectual, language-game, trust, transgressive teaching, transversalism, Hannah Arendt, Chantal Mouffe*

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