



Utopia in Helene Druskowitz (1856–1918)

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Helene von Druskowitz's misandry led her to draw a sketchy vision of a feminist utopia. In the last chapter, "Maxims for women", of her *Pessimistic Cardinal Propositions* Druskowitz gives advice to women concerning how they should organize their lives in order to cleanse themselves from impurities and horrors brought upon them by men. Since men "turned life into an endless satanic hell" (Druskowitz 1905, 1988: IV.3), women have no option but to live separately from men. According to Druskowitz, women should withdraw to cities that will be divided by gender. In them women will realize the liberating aspect of sexual abstinence: only then will they "...obtain all the rights and execute all decorous professional branches with easiness" (Druskowitz 1905, 1988: VI.11). Only then will women be "again holy by nature and worthy of a true cult" (Druskowitz 1905, 1988: IV.36).

Druskowitz does not overlook the consequences of such a utopia: it is going to be a short-lived one. Without reproduction, it is soon going to dissolve into nothing: Druskowitz calls this outcome "Endesende" ("final end"), in which women will be "leaders into death", which is their philosophical character (Druskowitz, 1905, 1988: IV.36.)

This bleak vision is somehow softened by her conceding that only few people should be left living in distant and hidden "valleys" (Druskowitz 1905, 1988: IV.3). However, she does not elaborate on that point directly - presumably only those men who have realized their lowliness and all the harms of a male-dominated world, and, in consequence, accept their subordinate position to women will be left to reproduce. This will also be a solution to the problem of overpopulation, which Druskowitz repeatedly mentions as a consequence of male lust (Druskowitz 1905, 1988: IV.3, IV.11, IV.24, V.7).

Primary Sources:

Erna Helene von Druskowitz 1905. *Pessimistische Kardinalsätze - Ein Vademecum für freiesten Geister*. Wittenberg: Herrose & Ziemsen.

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