

THE CONCEPT OF UNIVERSALISM IN NEOHUMANIST PHILOSOPHY BY P.R. SARKAR

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Tiivistelmä – Abstrakt – Abstract <p>Tutkimuksen tarkoitus on tuottaa uutta tietoa suomalaiselle varhaiskasvatukselle tutkimalla Prabhat Ranjan Sarkarin neohumanistista filosofiaa. Se on suhteellisen vähän tunnettu kasvatustieteellinen tutkimus, johon neohumanistinen kasvatustiede perustuu. Arvot ja kasvatustieteelliset näkemykset ohjaavat kasvattajan käytännön työtä ja siksi erilaisten kasvatustieteilijöiden syvä tuntemus auttaa kasvattajaa tekemään oikeita valintoja käytännön työssä. Tutkimus keskittyy keskeiseen käsitteeseen, universalismiin, selkeyttämiseen. Tarkoitus on selvittää miten Sarkar kuvaa universalismia kirjoituksissaan.</p> <p>Kirjasta Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism kirjoitettiin kommentaari, jotta neohumanistisen filosofian käsitteet voitaisiin eritellä ja selkeyttää. Universalismiin käsite todettiin keskeiseksi ja valittiin tutkimuksen kohteeksi. Systemaattinen analyysi suoritettiin kirjoituksista, joissa universalismi mainittiin. Ensimmäinen materiaali oli Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism, jossa Sarkar esittelee neohumanistisen filosofian. Toissijainen materiaali koostui The Electronic Edition of the Works of P.R. Sarkar V7.5 kirjoituksista, joissa universalismi mainittiin. Tutkimusaineisto koostui yhteensä 36 lainauksesta, jotka olivat peräisin 28 eri artikkelista. Lainaukset analysoitiin, jotta selvittäisiin miten Sarkar kuvaa universalismia käsitteellä.</p> <p>Tulokset osoittavat että Sarkar kuvaa johdonmukaisesti universalismia henkisyysperustuvaksi rakkaudeksi kaikkia olentoja kohtaan. Universalismiin käsitettä, neohumanistista filosofiaa ja neohumanistista kasvatusta käsiteltiin pohdinnassa suomalaisen varhaiskasvatukseen liittyen.</p>	
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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstrakt – Abstract</p> <p>The purpose of this research is to explore neohumanist philosophy by Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar in order to produce new information to the early childhood education in Finland. It is an educational philosophy, which neohumanist education is based on, and it is relatively unknown to the professional educators. The values and educational ideas guide the practical work of educators and that is why profound knowledge of different kinds of educational philosophies helps the educator to make the right choices in the practical work. This research is focused on clarifying the central concept of universalism. The purpose is to find out how Sarkar describes universalism in his writings.</p> <p>A commentary was written of the book Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism to separate and clarify the concepts of neohumanist philosophy. Concept of universalism was found to be a central concept and it was chosen as the focus of this research. A systematic analysis was done of writings where the concept of universalism was mentioned. The main material was the book Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism where the central concepts of neohumanist philosophy were introduced by P.R. Sarkar. Secondary materials were writings from The Electronic Edition of the Works of P.R. Sarkar V7.5 where the concept universalism was mentioned. All together there were 36 quotes from 28 different articles which were included in this research. These quotes were analyzed to clarify how Sarkar describes the concept of universalism.</p> <p>The results show that Sarkar describes quite consistently universalism as a spiritually based love towards all beings. The concept of universalism, neohumanist philosophy and neohumanist education were discussed in the context of Finnish early childhood education.</p>	
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1. INTRODUCTION

Since 1996 when I first heard of neohumanist education I have been interested to have a deeper understanding of what it is and how it differs from other educational philosophies. In my work as a kindergarten teacher I am interested in using the neohumanist ideas and practices in the practical work with children. Very little academic research has been made on neohumanist education and neohumanist philosophy although the practical education in schools and kindergartens has been going on for a few decades. At the moment there are more than 1000 institutions, from kindergartens to colleges and children homes based on neohumanist philosophy, engaged in teaching, research and service all over the world. Ananda Marga Gurukula is an international educational network for the neohumanist educational work. It is working for “a society in which there is love, peace, understanding, inspiration, justice and health for all beings” following the motto ‘knowledge is that which liberates’. (Ananda Marga Gurukula 2015)

The educational ideas in neohumanism are unique but they try to answer the same questions as all other educational philosophies. In my opinion the philosophy behind the education, the values and the way to perceive the world, are those that guide the educators when they are making big or small decisions on how to educate children. Neohumanism is not well known among professional educators or the general public. Neohumanism differs from many well known educational philosophies because it is based on an oriental world view. Doing research on neohumanism gives new information and new ideas to the Finnish early childhood setting.

In this research neohumanist education is approached by studying the philosophy that it is based on. From the neohumanist philosophy by Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar the concept of universalism is clarified by doing a systematic analysis of Sarkar’s writings. The concept of universalism was chosen because it is a very central concept in neohumanism.

Universalism is connected with the other central concepts in neohumanism and it is difficult to understand neohumanist ideas without a clear definition of universalism. In the practical work where neohumanist education is implemented those elements which are often mentioned on websites and articles are universalism, ecology and creativity.

In the discussion I am looking into whether Sarkar's ideas are aligned with the ideas guiding Finnish early childhood education and can he offer something new to benefit it.

2. THE BACKGROUND OF NEOHUMANIST PHILOSOPHY

P.R. Sarkar comes from the Indian cultural background and his thinking comes from the world view of yoga. Sarkar combines the concepts of oriental yoga tradition with western concept of humanism and introduces neohumanism as humanism newly explained (Sarkar 2004, 94-95). The Finnish early childhood education is based on humanist values of respecting one self and others. Neohumanism is according to Sarkar the future of humanistic philosophy which will solve the modern problems of the world and help to build a harmonious society. In chapters 2.1 and 2.2 there are short outlines of the history of yoga and the history of humanistic thought both of which Sarkar wants to combine in his philosophy.

2.1 HISTORY OF YOGA

According to Broo it is not known with certainty when and where yoga originates from. Patanjali's Yoga-sutra was composed 1500 years ago and it is the oldest written document on yoga but the practice of yoga is older than that. Already in Rgveda, which was written about 1200 BC, are mentioned some people who could be practicing yoga and there are drawings from the Indus culture 2600-1900 BC which portray people sitting in a way similar to yoga postures. Some people think that yoga dates back to the ancient beginning of human civilization but according to Broo it probably dates back to Veda era 1000-350 BC. (Broo 2010, 9-11)

According to Bharati most of Indian philosophy has been ideology and it is different from the modern definition of philosophy (Bharati 1975, 15). The philosophy of yoga has been very diverse and there are many different schools of philosophies and practices. The most famous of the ancient yoga teachers from 500 BC was Siddharta Gautama also known as Buddha. Many philosophers have accepted the way Patanjali systematized yoga in his Yoga-Sutra but still there are so many different kinds of yoga that they can not be treated as one philosophy. (Broo 2010, 12, 25-26)

Bharati mentions two features which are common to all indigenous belief systems in India, and which are also present in the Yoga philosophy, they are the belief that something absolute underlies the phenomenal world and metempsychosis (Bharati 1975, 17). These two elements are the base of the world view of yoga. The Cosmic Consciousness has created the phenomenal universe. All individual creatures have emerged in the process of the cycle of creation and they are bound to metempsychosis until they get emancipation from this cycle of rebirth and death by merging their minds with the Cosmic Mind. Unifying the individual mind with the Cosmic Mind is the goal of yoga and it can be done with the help of yoga practices. (Anandarama & Brim 2010, 18-20)

2.2 HISTORY OF HUMANISM

According to Ketonen (1981) humanism as a cultural-historical concept dates back to 13th century where authors, teachers and researchers took an interest in the old Greece and Roman culture, language and literature. Famous Italian humanists of that time were Boccaccio, Dante and Petrarca. The ideological content of humanism was to get rid of ways of thinking and living which are rigid and decided by others. They wanted to reach richer and deeper human thoughts, meanings and liberties. (Ketonen 1981, 50-53)

According to von Wright the attitude towards life which fits the description of humanism existed already in the ancient Greece 500 BC and it was revived during the European Renaissance. Humanistic attitude to life is characterized by respect for humans, respect for civilization and an endeavor to search for the truth. The renaissance humanists dreamt of 'regnum hominis' a society which was designed to help the individuals to become ideal humans. A fundamental idea in humanism is the individual's right for freedom within sensible limits. The freedom of thought and speech are important in humanistic society. (von Wright 1988,16-18, 154)

Humanistic attitude to life has existed since the times of the ancient Greece and it has changed in different historical environments according to von Wright. The ancient Greece wanted to follow the ideal of nature and to live in harmony with nature. During

the renaissance people started to use their knowledge of nature in order to use the nature's resources to serve their own purposes. In the modern times the ecological crisis and the development of technology is forcing the philosophy of humanism to find itself again in a form that suits its current historical environment. (von Wright 1988,65-67, 152, 156-158, 160-161)

3. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The practical work that educators do is always influenced by the social, economic and cultural environments where they work. During history new ideas presented by educators, philosophers or other influential people have changed the way of thinking and started new trends in education. According to Bruhn around year 1900 a new educational trend called progressive education was created. It wanted to create a new free school which was designed for the student. It wanted to oppose the old system of school which was focused on the teacher and which had still formats from the medieval time. John Dewey was one of the leading figures in starting this trend. Year 1921 the world organisation New Education Fellowship was started to help in renewing the school system all over the world. Bruhn separates the new trends depending on their emphasis on activity, freedom or social aspects of pedagogy. (Bruhn 1973, 7-9, 21-22)

Some of those educators who emphasized the students' activity in learning were according to Bruhn (1973) James, Parker, Reddie, Dewey and Kerschensteiner. William James wanted to educate gentlemen in other words free men and women with strong morality. In his opinion the purpose of philosophy was to support the development of society. Francis Wayland Parker wanted to educate a moral character and a sense of social responsibility. Cecil Reddie wanted to educate Christian gentlemen. According to John Dewey "The ideal of education is creation of power of self control". He wanted to educate children to live with freedom, to find the strength within themselves and to use it to help the society around them. According to George Kerschensteiner the purpose of education was moral freedom and he wanted to strengthen the students will by physical work in the schools. (Bruhn 1973, 10-12, 21-26, 32, 39-48)

Those educators who emphasized freedom and respect for the child were among others Rousseau, Key, Neill and Montessori. Ellen Key had the opinion that education has to support the natural development of the child and she demanded several changes in the society which would allow the child to have the best possible environment. Maria Montessori wanted to ensure a free and natural development for the children. In his

school Summerhill A.S. Neill gave freedom to his students so that their individual personalities would be able to develop. (Bruhn 1973, 87-103, 114, 168-169)

Some of those educators that Bruhn mentions as emphasizing the social aspect of pedagogy are Gill and Foerster. In order to change the society Wilson L. Gill wanted to educate children to democracy by starting self-government in schools by students. With students self-government Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster wanted to develop their moral character based on Christian values. (Bruhn 1973, 175-183)

Bruhn also mentions a trend which emphasizes aesthetic and devotional aspect of education. Some of the educators were Tagore, Steiner and Lichtwark. Alfred Lichtwark highlighted the didactic value of art. In his boarding school Shantiniketan Rabindranath Tagore highlighted the meaning of meditative and devotional lifestyle. Rudolf Steiner's metaphysical idea, anthroposophy, was the base of his pedagogical philosophy. (Bruhn 1973, 219, 223-228, 232)

According to Egidius education is influenced by values and opinions of the surrounding society. The ideas on what people and society are like and what they should be like determine the goal of education which has political and ideological importance. For this reason different ideologies, religious opinions and philosophical theories are important in pedagogical discussion. One should also use correct terms and have a profound understanding of educational philosophy otherwise interpretations can lead to misunderstandings and confusion. (Egidius 1983, 11-12, 19-20, 120)

According to Hirsjärvi education conveys values and creates new ones (Hirsjärvi & Huttunen 1991, 45). In my opinion especially in the field of early childhood education, where the emphasis is on character building and communication instead of teaching academic skills, the values and the world view guide the educator, whether they are aware of it or not, on how to work with small children. For this reason educators should be aware of their own pedagogical ideology and how it is manifested in the practical work. Increasing one's knowledge on educational philosophy helps to formulate one's own personal view on education.

4. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The purpose of this research is to create a clearer understanding of neohumanist philosophy by Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar. This research is focusing on one concept in neohumanist philosophy, the concept of universalism, which was chosen to be the focus of this research because it is a very central idea in understanding the neohumanist philosophy. In the discussion the concept of universalism and neohumanist ideas on education are placed in the context of early childhood education.

The research question is:

How does P.R. Sarkar describe the concept of universalism in his neohumanist philosophy?

5. METHOD

In order to get a deeper and clearer understanding of neohumanist education it is necessary to analyze the neohumanist philosophy which it is based on. Systematic analysis is used for this research because it is a method meant for analyzing educational philosophies. According to Jussila, Montonen and Nurmi (1993, 159) the systematic analysis can be used to analyze the thoughts of a person and to analyze a concept in his thinking.

According to Jussila etc. (1993) the systematic analysis can be divided into three main parts, which are conceptualization of the problem and the material, analysis and explaining and using the results of the analysis.

1. Conceptualization of the problem and the material
 - 1.1 Structuring the problems
 - 1.2 Selection of the texts
 - 1.3 Interpretation of the texts
 - 1.4 Specification of the hypothesis or questions
2. Actual analysis
 - 2.1 Discovery of the concepts
 - 2.2 Reconstruction of the arguments
 - 2.3 Breakdown of the argumentation (to recognize, clarify and define the arguments)
3. Explaining and using the results of the analysis
 - 3.1 Displaying the prerequisites, holes and discrepancies
 - 3.2 To juxtapose the whole structure and the researched concept
 - 3.3 Comparison and synthesis

In the background chapters the central concepts for the research have been presented and defined. In the discussion Sarkar's neohumanist philosophy and the concept of universalism, as a result of the systematic analysis, will be connected in more detail to the humanist tradition and the yoga tradition. Because Sarkar doesn't elaborate specifically on the early childhood education are the meaning of and the possibilities within the

concepts of neohumanism and universalism discussed in the context of educational philosophy and Finnish system of early childhood education.

6. CHOOSING RESEARCH MATERIAL

In order to conceptualize the problem and to get a clear focus for the research first materials about neohumanist education, neohumanist philosophy, educational philosophy and research methods were read. The research problem and those texts by Sarkar, which were thought to be relevant for this research, were chosen.

P.R. Sarkar's works

Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar (1921-1990) was an Indian philosopher. His literary work consists of discourses that he gave as speeches in front of an audience or as articles that he dictated for one or a few persons between the years 1955 and 1990. Both types of writings will be referred to in this text as an article. These writings are total 268 books of which 138 books have been published in English. He also composed 5018 songs with music and lyrics. These songs called Prabhat Samgiita make 25 books of the total 268 books. Sarkar gave articles in Bengali, Hindi and English languages. The topics of his writings include spiritual topics, sociology, economics, philology, history, children's stories and various other topics. (Sarkar 2010, Publisher's note)

Sarkar could change the language during the talk so that some of his discourses are given in Bengali, English and Hindi languages. (Sarkar 2010, Neohumanism in a Nutshell Part 1, publisher's Note)

EIEdit 7.5 consists of 1271 articles that are either originally given in English or translated to English. About 600 articles are not included because they are not translated to English (Sarkar 2010, Publisher's note). Grammar of Bengali language and Prabhat Samgeet songs are among those articles which are not included in EIEdit 7.5. This means that from the total about 1870 articles about 32% are not included in EIEdit 7.5 and therefore are not included in this research.

According to Jussila etc. (1993) the most important criteria for choosing the research material is the relevance of the material for the research. For the purpose of this research it was necessary to choose those texts which were relevant for finding out what Sarkar

meant by the concept of universalism in his neohumanist philosophy. In my opinion The Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism is the most relevant book on neohumanist philosophy because Sarkar introduced the concept of neohumanism in 1981 with a series of discourses that were published in it. Later his other discourses related to neohumanism were published as a series Neohumanism in a Nutshell (parts 1 and 2).

For the purpose of this research first a commentary and a concordance were written of the book Liberation of Intellect: Neo-Humanism because according to Jussila, Montonen and Nurmi (1993, 185-186) writing a commentary and a concordance can help to interpret the text. Then one concept from neohumanist philosophy, universalism, was chosen because it is a very central idea. The principle of social equality is based on universalism and a neohumanist society is based on the principle of social equality. I also thought that universalism might be a concept which could be connected to early childhood education. After choosing the concept the research problem was formulated. From Sarkar's main book on neohumanist philosophy, the Liberation of Intellect: Neo-Humanism those quotes which had the term universalism were analyzed. Then the term universalism was searched for in the electronic edition of Sarkar's works. Those texts where the word universalism was mentioned were analyzed.

7. ANALYSIS

In order to define the research problem and the material the neohumanist philosophy has to be looked at to get a 'map' or a general idea of it. In chapter 7.1 there is a commentary of neohumanist philosophy as it is explained in the book Liberation of Intellect:

Neohumanism, in which Sarkar has explained the basic ideas of neohumanist philosophy. A concordance is in appendix I. The articles of this book have been given as talks in front of an audience between 31.12.1981 and March 1982. In these articles Sarkar talks about the central concepts of his neohumanist philosophy. He touches on the same topics in many different talks. This commentary was made by separating different concepts, defining what those concepts mean and then putting them together again to get an idea of what neohumanist philosophy is as a whole. This one book is a small part of Sarkar's literary work and its main purpose is to explain the central concepts of neohumanist philosophy. Sarkar's world view that this philosophy is based on is not explained in this book in detail. This commentary attempts only to name and define the central concepts mentioned in this book and not to explain the whole background of Sarkar's thinking. I have also tried to maintain Sarkar's original thought and voice in this commentary that is why many of his concepts are same as in the original text although they are not in quotation marks.

7.1 NEOHUMANIST PHILOSOPHY

Neohumanist philosophy is concerned with how human mind works and how it affects the society that people live in. A very central concept is sentiment which is one mode for the mind to work. Sarkar mentions devotional sentiment which guides society towards harmony and destructive sentiments which harm the balance and peace in society and lead to exploitation. In order to remove the effect of destructive sentiments the structure of society has to be based on the principle of social equality. Neohumanism means practicing spirituality and expanding one's inner love to all other creatures.

Human beings suffer from physical, psychic and spiritual bondages. The main cause behind physical bondage is in the mind. To liberate society from exploitation people's

consciousness has to be aroused and their intellect has to be liberated. This can be achieved through study, knowledge and association with learned and enlightened people. In order to direct their own inner beings towards perfection people have to overcome destructive sentiments in their own lives.

According to Sarkar the existence of human beings is more psychic than physical. Some of the experiences with the outer world are adjusted with inner psychic rhythm and some of them are not. Human beings existential awareness or their inner psychic movement is rhythmic and their mental wellbeing is connected to how well their inner psychic rhythm conforms to their environment. When the rhythm and speed of a person's lifestyle conforms to inner psychic rhythm they feel comfortable but when they are not adjusted with each other one feels uncomfortable. When people experience lack of adjustment in the speed or rhythm of the inner and the outer worlds they may lose mental adjustment and this may cause people to suffer from psychic disorders.

According to Sarkar human mind has three different modes of working to guide the actions of human beings. First one of them is rationality, using logical thinking and discrimination, which means judging between proper and improper with the help of conscience. The second is a sentiment which means not discriminating between just and unjust but simply following a liking for or attraction to something. The third way for the mind to work is to act according to inborn instinct. The more people engage in rational thinking the less their actions are guided by sentiment.

Sentiments which are harmful for society

The state of harmonious and loving spiritual society is disturbed by peoples actions based on destructive sentiments which are geo-sentiment, socio-sentiment and human sentiment.

“In the past, this geo-sentiment has caused enormous harm to many individuals and communities of people. Intelligent people must keep themselves aloof from this geo-sentiment and support nothing which is based on it, because it pollutes the devotional sentiment; it degrades human beings and undermines human excellence.”(Sarkar 2004, 4)

Geo-sentiment means working to benefit a geographical area and the people living in it even at the cost of harming other geographical areas and the people living in them. When one is following geo-sentiment this means that one is following one's preference or liking to a particular territory without considering whether it is the right or the logical thing to do. When one follows sentiments instead of logical thinking this leads to superstitious thinking. Superstitions cause conflicts between groups of people who hold contradictory beliefs and this destroys the peace of society and leads to wars and violence. Geo-sentiment hinders the inner growth of human beings because it threatens people's devotional sentiment by creating disharmony in society.

There are other harmful sentiments which are based on geo-sentiment for example geo-patriotism, geo-economics, geo-politics and geo-religion. Geo-religions have many superstitions due to relying on blind faith instead of logical thinking. All those religious, economic, political or social theories which are based on geo-sentiment have a lot of superstitious thinking. Geo-sentiment encourages a mentality to exploit others and from this mentality comes also fascism, imperialism, capitalism, oligarchy and bureaucracy.

Geo-sentiment comes from not following path of rationality and conscience. Geo-sentiment can be removed with rationalistic mentality, which can be developed by studying various subjects including spiritual subjects, and by rational thinking which means analyzing positive and negative sides through rational analysis and making a logical decision. That logical decision can be accepted if it is conducive to human welfare and for the benefit, happiness and spiritual well-being of all beings. This final discrimination for promoting human welfare is called conscience.

Sarkar talks about two types of knowledge. One is transcendental knowledge, also known as self-knowledge, which operates in the purely spiritual world and inspires people to move in purely spiritual world. Other one is non-transcendental knowledge which is related to material world and can be acquired by studying. Sarkar mentions literal study by reading books and non-literate study by hearing others discourses and by coming in contact with different objects through senses and collecting information. There may be defects in both literate and non-literate study due to ignorance and due to change in time. These defects can be eliminated by rationalistic mentality.

“Socio-sentiment has, in the past, caused much bloodshed and created enormous division and mutual distrust among human groups, separating one group from another and throwing them into the dark dungeons of petty dogmas.”(Sarkar 2004, 5)

Sarkar mentions that some beings have a sentiment to live individually and other beings have a sentiment to live collectively. Humans have a collective sentimental tendency to live in groups and when people follow this sentimentality instead of logical rationality it is called socio-sentiment. Socio-sentiment means working to benefit a particular social group, a community of people even at the cost of violating the interests and natural growth of other communities. It is a psychic disease which causes people to confine themselves within a particular group. Socio-sentiment hinders the clear intellectual thinking and causes people to harm other groups including members of their own subgroup. It causes people to suffer from different complexes.

“A social group’s own deity “says” to the people, “Your God is the true God: all other gods are false. You are the chosen people in this universe: all others are cursed!” These are the preachings of socio-religion.

Similar is the case with socio-patriotism and socio-economics: “Let that country be destroyed. I will conquer that nation and drain its vitality for the sake of my own country” – this is socio-patriotism, also called “fascism”.”(Sarkar 2004, 12)

There are other harmful sentiments that are based on socio-sentiment for example socio-patriotism also called fascism, socio-religion, socio-economics, socio-art, socio-architecture and socio-literature. Also imperialism, capitalism, oligarchy and bureaucracy are the results of socio-sentiment.

According to Sarkar humans’ actions are inspired by the principle of social equality and the principle of selfish pleasure which means doing things in order to get pleasure for one self. The principle of social equality means that all creatures have the right to survive and thrive and for this reason every human being must be guaranteed with minimum necessities for living in other words food, clothes, education, accommodation and medical treatment. According to the principle of social equality the basis of righteousness is that everyone should progress collectively. According to neohumanist philosophy

Supreme Consciousness is the goal of everyone and there is an endeavor to advance towards the spiritual goal by forming a society free from all inequalities with all humans moving ahead together. Neohumanist philosophy is based on the principle of social equality.

According to Sarkar an essential characteristic of this world is dynamism. There is movement in collective and individual life and it requires inspiration, capacity for movement and goal of movement. Principle of social equality provides a firm foundation for society on which proto-spiritual mentality can maintain social dynamism. People spontaneously develop proto-spiritual mentality when they deeply realize the meaning of the principle of social equality. Socio-sentiment can be removed by developing proto-spiritual mentality which means understanding and following the principle of social equality. When people develop proto-spiritual mentality their practice of devotion becomes devotion as a principle and they are able to fight against socio-sentiment.

Socio-sentiment includes more than one individual. The narrowest of all the socio-sentiments is 'socio-sentiment minimitis' and the most expanded is 'socio-sentiment maximitis'. Socio-sentiment minimitis includes only a few people for example the members of one family and socio-sentiment maximitis includes all people and it is also called 'ordinary or general humanism' or human sentiment. They differ in radius but are both mental diseases. When socio-sentiment is widened to working to benefit all humans it still does not solve all problems because it can not solve all intra-humanistic conflicts and there are many other living creatures besides humans which also have to be taken into consideration. Destroying animal and plant kingdoms upset ecological balance and can endanger human life. The tendency of cruelty can be seen in the torture of animals and plants and also among humans themselves. Human sentiment leads to violating the rights of non-human creatures.

“There is still another sentiment – human sentiment. Many persons were born in the past who shed copious tears for suffering humanity. But strangely enough, after their eloquent speeches were over, they sat down comfortably at a dinner table and treated themselves to a delicious meal of hilsa and kaimach fish – as if those fish had not suffered pain and

death. This human sentiment has expressly violated the interests of non-human creatures, but its proponents have found nothing wrong with it. (Sarkar 2004, 5)

Humanism which is guided by human sentiment can not have a genuine spirit. In the absence of a firm foundation ordinary human sentiment remains unstable and may disappear suddenly. Human sentiment must be motivated by the spirit of neohumanism. When the fundamental spirit of humanism is forgotten then one deviates from the principles of righteousness. If one practices general humanism instead of firmly establishing one's mind in the spirit of humanism one becomes guided by pseudo-humanistic strategy and is bound to bring the social group which one has benefited within the scope of socio-sentiment and causing them to be exploited either directly or indirectly sooner or later. Human sentiment leads to utilizing those people who are helped by exploiting them financially or trying to change them.

Exploitation in society is the result of harmful sentiments

Exploitation happens in social, economic, cultural and religious spheres.

“Forty-five or fifty years ago (in India), some special train compartments were reserved for those who wore European dress, and those in Indian dress would be rejected. This is a clear instance of injecting an inferiority complex into people's minds. What was the result? It merely paved the way for psychic exploitation, and based on this, all other kinds of exploitation could easily take place.” (Sarkar 2004, 48-49)

The ruling group in society injects a fear complex in the minds of that group that they want to exploit. By creating fear complexes in others minds they indirectly inject inferiority complexes in others and superiority complexes in themselves. The purpose of giving others a feeling of inferiority and a feeling of the exploiters superiority is to exploit people on psychic level. Those who have a superiority complex will try to impose inferiority complex in others when they are in a position of power. When people have an inferiority complex it is easy for the ruling group to subject those people first to psychic exploitation and then economic exploitation and also exploit them in other spheres of life such as politics, culture and religion. Dividing people to exploiters and the exploited widens the social gap in society and as a result well-knit society can not develop.

Influenced by socio-sentiment people do not defend themselves by demanding their own rights as human beings who have the right to live with dignity.

Psycho-economic exploitation is done secretly with a cunning plan and politico-economic exploitation is done with the help of military. One community tries to dominate another community in order to ensure supply of raw material and availability of markets for their finished products. The industrially developed countries have resorted to imperialism for this reason. Financially handicapped communities become slaves because of fear complex and poverty. Exploiters govern the exploited or buy the rulers with their wealth. When people realize that they are being exploited the rulers lose their popular support and they continue their activities with the help of bureaucracy and oligarchy. When the exploited developing or undeveloped countries detect the intentions of developed countries conflicts arise and threaten world peace.

There is exploitation and degeneration in cultural life also. Human beings have one common culture but there are some local variations in its expression. That community which is motivated by socio-sentiment to exploit others tries to destroy local cultural expressions of other communities. It imposes its language, dress and ideas on other communities and paves the way for exploitation by paralyzing those people psychologically. It is easy to control people through their cultural life. Exploitation in the cultural sphere is accomplished by the propagation of pseudo-culture. The mind has a natural tendency to degrade itself which means that it flows more easily downwards than upwards. If a wealthier group wants to maintain its exploitation over a group having a more developed cultural heritage, it can impose vulgar cinemas and dramas upon the other group causing them to become psychologically paralyzed so that they can not stand united against cultural or other kind of exploitation.

There is a domineering influence of religion on human mind and there is corruption in religious life. Spiritual atmosphere may become badly affected due to psychic diseases and cause people to become apathetic to spirituality. Religion is being used to create satellite groups by wealthy people to gain economic or political benefits. Religions are built on dogmatic thinking which does not allow free thinking. Different religious groups have gone to battles because their dogmas were contradictory and their leaders were only

concerned with their selfish interests. Many people have tried to achieve their selfish ends by fooling people with transcendental knowledge, incarnation theory or informing that they are the messengers of God. Propagators of religion have not tried to promote universal religion which is free from narrowness.

Many theories that have been developed to improve society were not beneficial. If a materialistic theory contains narrowness like geo-sentiment or socio-sentiment imbalance is bound to occur between inner and outer worlds. Psycho physical imbalance will follow and people will be poor and deprived. For the progress in external world clear guidelines with a clear and well-integrated philosophical base is required. This base is the principle of social equality. When a philosophical base is lacking in society people easily lose balance in social life. Any theory that contains the seed of well-being in its apparent foundation is following the principle of social equality and it promotes the welfare of all.

Sarkar names different ways to respond to attempts to change the society.

Revolutionaries speak out truth in clear language and attempt to make changes. Vocal revolutionaries speak against exploitation but act opposite in practical life. Reformists want everything to be done gradually and allow exploitation to continue. Reactionaries resist change because they suffer from mental disease of fear complex, they are afraid to accept new things.

People who cause harm in society can be doing so unconsciously and are unaware of the damage they are causing to society. When these people realize that they have made a mistake some of them admit their mistake and change their behavior and some of them are so egoistic that they can not admit their mistake and they continue to harm society. There are also people who knowingly and deliberately are working with pseudo-humanistic strategy. They are called human chameleons because they shift from one sentiment to another with metamorphosed sentimental strategy. When their intentions are detected they become desperate and try to fight back. To recognize people using these strategies one needs intellect and a trained mind. To train one's mind one needs a base which is the principle of social equality that guarantees all humans the right to food, clothes, accommodation, education and medical treatment. One also needs forward movement which comes from proto-psycho-spirituality. When a person is guided by it to

think in a particular way and sees that one's own benevolent mode of thinking is not reflected in other people's activities that person can easily realize their true nature and inform other people in society also.

Society can be changed by counteracting harmful sentiments

According to Sarkar devotional sentiment is humanity's valuable treasure because it transforms the humans' worldly existence into a spiritual stage. Devotion helps people to reach a subtler stage so that their minds become more stable and they realize spiritual bliss. Devotion develops from being a practice to being a principle in life and after that it becomes the highest mission in life. Devotion can be developed through keeping the final goal in mind but adjusting to the environment where one is living. Lack of adjustment of people's inner psychic rhythm with the external world causes people to experience distress and inhibits the development of the internal devotional sentiment. In the absence of devotion life lacks rhythm and becomes dull and miserable. When humans pay attention only to the external world they lose their internal devotion. Cynicism results when the internal aspect of life is neglected. Element of devotion can be protected with a proper philosophy which will establish the correct harmony between the spiritual and material worlds and be a source of inspiration for the progress of society. In order to have a harmonious society that corresponds with people's inner rhythm and allows devotion to develop the society has to have a clear philosophical base and clear guidelines.

“So then, what is Neohumanism? Humanism newly-explained and newly-seremonized is Neohumanism – the philosophy which will make people understand that they are not merely ordinary creatures. This philosophy will liberate them from all inferiority feelings and defects and make them aware of their own importance; it will inspire them to build a new world.” (Sarkar 2004, 95)

Concern for other human beings has made people humanists. Neohumanism is expanding the spirit of humanism to universalism which is a practice of love for all creatures of universe. Neohumanism provides a new interpretation for human existence by stating that the responsibility for the entire universe rests with humans. The humanity can not progress if it does not give proper value to the lives of all creatures.

Neohumanism can be established through three stages. First stage is spiritual practice which starts with the elevation of protoplasmic cells and finally ends in attainment of the supreme goal. Second stage is spiritual essence. Humanity has a collective mind and changes have to be effected in the mental flow of this collective mind. Third stage is spirituality as a mission where individuals' entire existence becomes one with the controlling nucleus of the cosmological order and this is the highest expression of neohumanism.

The goal of human life is to reach a state of spirituality as a mission where individual life is unified with collective life and earth becomes a harmonious and blissful place to live. Everyone is living according to neohumanist principles with practice of love towards every creature. The task of humans is to advance psycho-spiritually towards Supreme Consciousness inspired by Neohumanist ideals to establish a social structure based on universalism.

7.2 CONCEPT OF UNIVERSALISM

Searching for the word universalism in EIEEdit 7.5 gave 62 quotes in 35 articles. Included were some articles which were published again in compilations. After removing duplicates and other clearly unrelated material, there were 36 quotes from 28 articles where the word universalism was mentioned.

Those two articles which were printed in *The Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism* are the main material for this research and the others are analyzed to see whether the concept of universalism seems to be similar in other books also.

In the book *The Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism* there were two articles where word universalism was mentioned all together three times.

“This Neohumanism will elevate humanism to universalism, the cult of love for all created beings of this universe.

So the actual task of human beings is to maintain a subjective approach – that is, they will advance psycho-spiritually towards the Supreme Consciousness, inspired by Neohumanistic ideals – while at the same time they must strive for the expansion of humanistic principles and thus establish a social structure based on universalism.”(Sarkar 2004, 7)

“Now, this socio-sentiment, in its stage of exellencio or in theory maximitis, it is called “humanism”. Suppose I was working for a particular nation, but now I am working for all nations. When I admit the existence of nations and say that I am working for all nations, then it is neither humanism nor universalism – it is merely internationalism. When I use the term “internationalism”, I am admitting the existence of separate nations, and along this I must naturally also think, within the nations, of the people’s five fundamental requirements of life (food, clothes, education, shelter, and medical care). But when I discover that one nation is trying to thrive on the life-blood of another, I oppose it, and this opposition ultimately leads to world war. So internationalism is not the solution either. “(Sarkar 2004, 60)

In these quotes universalism is defined as the practice of love for all created beings of this universe. Here is mentioned also that by expanding humanistic principles a social structure based on universalism can be established. According to neohumanist philosophy the structure of society should be based on the principle of social equality which means that all beings have the right to live and thrive. Universalism is also used as an opposite of internationalism which is not offering a solution to the problems of the world.

In the other 26 articles there were 34 quotes. First I grouped them under headings depending on what was the topic in the quote. Total of 16 quotes which fit under a heading ‘against isms’ described universalism as something which is different or opposite of ‘isms’ which were specified as casteism, tribalism, communalism, provincialism, parochialism, nationalism, racialism and internationalism. Total of 10 quotes concerned society and political system. Total 5 quotes concerned education and 3 quotes concerned spirituality.

Universalism was used as an opposite of 'isms' which offers solution to all problems because it is free from narrowness. This narrowness would be the destructive sentiments which are described in detail in neohumanist philosophy. Universalism was described to mean universal humanism, a universal sentiment and universal love with morality and a spiritual base. Universalism was also described as a sense of love and compassion for all creation, a desire to love and help everybody and to look upon all with love and affection. Universalism was also described as a feeling of selflessness, being established in one's own true self, not regarding other entities of the universe as separate from oneself and to have cosmic ideation and to love the divine element latent in every human being which is the reflection of Supreme Entity. In these quotes universalism is described as a spiritually based love for other creatures and this is similar to the use of the concept universalism in *The Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism*.

Universalism is a very central concept in neohumanist philosophy because it is universalism which elevates humanism to neohumanism. Neohumanism is based on the principle of social equality which is based on universalism. The dynamic force that helps to establish neohumanism and counteract the harmful sentiments, geo-sentiment, socio-sentiment and human sentiment, is proto-spiritual mentality which can be developed through realizing the principle of social equality in one's heart which means living with universalistic outlook.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The results of this research indicate that P.R.Sarkar describes the concept of universalism in his neohumanist philosophy as a universal, spiritual love towards all beings in the universe.

Sarkar's concept of universalism reveals the idea of inter-connectedness of all beings. The ontology of his philosophy is based on the world view of yoga and the concept of universalism reflects this idea.

9. DISCUSSION

9.1 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

According to Jussila etc. (1993) systematic analysis can not be done from translated texts. In order to be able to go deeper into the meaning of the text and to understand what the author has meant in his texts it is necessary to do the analysis from the original writings in the original language. The fact that I have used translated texts in this research affects the reliability of the research.

According to the publisher Sarkar carefully gave key terms and phrases also in English because he thought that these discourses given in Bengali language would get international attention (Sarkar 2004, publishers note).

Having more than one researcher with similar findings would make the results of the research more reliable. Conducting the analysis from the texts in the original language and being able to interpret the texts with a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural background of Indian society where Sarkar lived, would give a better chance of interpreting Sarkar's writings and the possible hidden meanings which could not be found in this research.

In this research only one book of 268 books was read carefully and analyzed with the help of writing a commentary and a concordance. In addition a word search was done from a collection of 1271 articles and only those 28 articles were read which had the word universalism in them. In this research the materials used were limited to those which were thought to be the most relevant ones. Including all of Sarkar's published and still unpublished literary works in a research would give a deeper understanding of his thinking.

I feel however that the material used for this research was relevant for the purpose of the study. Sarkar himself wrote that in the book liberation of intellect: Neohumanism he has explained neohumanism which is his idea of narrow thinking being transformed by universalism (Sarkar 2010, Religious Dogma – Excerpt B).

Attempting to conduct a more reliable research by reading all Sarkar's articles published in English, learning Hindi and Bengali languages and travelling to India to search for unpublished articles or finding another researcher who is able to conduct another research were not possible within the frame-work of this Master's Thesis. Regardless of the obvious shortcomings in the reliability of this research I feel I have got some valid results regarding how Sarkar describes the concept of universalism in his neohumanist philosophy. In my opinion the texts of Sarkar are consistent with the results of my analysis. Also Sarkar seems to use the term consistently in different articles which are written at different times.

The purpose of this research was not to find some ultimate truth but rather to explore a new area and ask questions instead of answering them. There are very few academic writings on Sarkar's neohumanism and as far as I know this is the first one published in Finland and that is why it gives new information to the field of early childhood education in Finland.

9.2 P.R. SARKAR'S CONCEPT OF UNIVERSALISM AND HIS NEOHUMANIST PHILOSOPHY IN THE LIGHT OF HUMANISTIC TRADITION AND YOGA TRADITION

The humanistic tradition comes from the ancient Greek philosophers and although it has changed according to time and place it has maintained the same ideals over the centuries. The world view and the concept of what is a human being are very different with Plato living in ancient Greece, Pico della Mirandola living in medieval Europe, educational philosophers living in the Europe after the French Revolution or von Wright living in the 20th century Finland (von Wright 1988). The ancient Greece civilization still remains an ideal and the trail of humanistic thinking is based on the work of the previous thinkers. Sarkar is quite different in this regard. He does not refer to other philosophers very much rather he explains his own ideas in detail and with practical examples. He is coming from a different cultural and historical background than the western humanists. According to Sarkar the concern for other humans has made people humanists but also he defines

“ordinary humanism” as a mental disease which can not solve the problems of the world but rather causes more problems (Sarkar 2004, 6, 59-68). Sarkar suggests that the spirit of humanism should be expanded to include all beings so that it becomes universalism which means the practice of spiritual love towards all creatures (Sarkar 2004, 7).

The modern humanists might not agree with Sarkar’s views on humanism or his idea of neohumanism as the future of humanism which will help to establish ‘regnum hominis’ as he sees it. According to von Wright humanism finds itself today in a crisis due to the ecological problems caused by advanced technology and in order to overcome it humans have to find out who they are and what is their place in the world (von Wright 1988, 160-161). The central idea of neohumanism is spirituality which is not playing a major role in the history of humanism (Soper 1986, 9). Rather humanists tend to rely on human intellect, rationality and civilization to reach their ideals. The renaissance humanists were trying to overcome the authority of religion in order to think for themselves. Sarkar criticizes religion for exploiting people and hampering their spiritual development and emphasizes the importance of free intellect, rational thinking and study to gain correct knowledge. According to Ketonen God seems to be necessary for humans in some form but von Wright is wondering whether religion will be important in the future or it will be replaced with some other kind of ideology which is totally different from previous ones (Ketonen 1981, 57, von Wright 1988, 159). The concept that the whole structure of society is based on a spiritual idea seems to be very far from the modern humanistic thinking although the ancient Greek philosophers were following the ideal of nature which was according to them created by gods.

The tradition of yoga is even older and more diverse than the tradition of humanistic thought. Sarkar has written several books on yoga and taught yoga practices to his yoga students for several years. Sarkar has his own unique understanding of yoga but it is based on the yoga tradition and has many similarities with other schools of yoga. (Broo 2010, 9-26, Anandarama & Brim 2010, 18-20)

9.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF AWARENESS OF EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY FOR PRACTICAL EDUCATIONAL WORK

From a speech Laurin Zilliaccus held in New Zealand 1937 as a chairman for the New Education Fellowship one can understand how much inspiration, vision and hard work is needed to run a school which is trying to create a new pedagogical approach. His school in Helsinki had a bank with its own currency, a shop and self-government all of them run by the students (Zillen 60 år 1988, 22-25). Although the society was different 80 years ago trying to create a new pedagogical approach in today's world also requires inspiration, vision and a lot of hard work. Every Finnish kindergarten teacher is an educator who makes big and small choices in their work every day. In my opinion it is important to keep the pedagogical vision alive and reflect over one's own work constantly. If a kindergarten teacher forgets the main purpose of their work, which in my opinion is working for the welfare and development of the child, they have difficulty to realize which decisions to make in the daily work. Taking care of children can become just a job which one tries to do with minimum effort. Working in conditions where one feels one is not able to do one's best efforts for the children's wellbeing is very exhausting mentally.

In my opinion educators should be aware of their own values and their own personal educational philosophy. Getting more in-depth knowledge of an educational philosophy that one is already trying to implement or getting to know a completely new philosophy and judging whether one can agree with it or not is in my opinion a good way to refresh one's awareness of one's own personal educational ideas.

9.4 SARKAR'S PHILOSOPHY IN COMPARISON WITH OTHER EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES

Sarkar was a philosopher not an educator working with children. He didn't develop an educational method or material although he gave also practical advice on how to educate children. In neohumanist education students' activity and individual efforts for learning are encouraged in the teaching methods and the student volunteers (STUVOL) activities. Teaching methods are decided by the teachers and they vary in different schools however

the child and individual freedom are respected. Students are also educated to be an active member of society and to do different service projects. Neohumanist education emphasizes on art and the devotional aspect in the form of spiritual practice and moral education. (Anandarama & Brim 2010, 84-85, 89-97)

Sarkar's neohumanist education has similarities with the trends of progressive pedagogy mentioned by Bruhn but it also has differences. Rabindranath Tagore would probably come closest in terms of a similar world view. Sarkar wanted to educate the individual to develop to the best potential and to transform the society. He intended to do this by teaching spiritual practice and social action.

9.5 P.R. SARKAR'S CONCEPT OF UNIVERSALISM AND NEOHUMANIST PHILOSOPHY IN THE LIGHT OF PRACTICAL EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN A FINNISH DAY CARE SETTING

The Finnish Early Childhood Education and care (ECEC) is governed by national regulations and policy documents and local policy documents. In the Convention on the Rights of the Child the human dignity of the child is a central value. In short a child has the right to grow up in a safe environment where he has stable and safe relationships with others, and receives care that enables him to grow, develop, learn and play. His opinions are heard and respected and he has right to make decisions about himself and to be treated equally. His own individuality, language, culture and religion are respected. (Varhaiskasvatussuunnitelman perusteet, 2005, Valtioneuvoston periaatepäätös,2002)

In ECEC there are three educational goals for development as a human being: promotion of personal well-being, reinforcement of considerate behavior and action towards others and gradual build-up of autonomy. The principal target is to promote the child's overall well-being. The mission of education is also to develop a better world.

(Varhaiskasvatussuunnitelman perusteet, 2005)

Neohumanist Education (NHE) also states that the basic needs, physical, social and psychological, of each child must be met. NHE aims to lead the children to realize their full potential as physical, mental and spiritual beings, to live a life that is an expression of

their own unique gifts and neohumanist values and to move with all collectively.

(Anandarama & Brim 2010, 20)

The Progressive School of Long Island which has been teaching neohumanist education for 30 years states as its mission:

“I have a gift,

The world needs my gift,

And I am not afraid to offer it.

If our graduating students leave us with this one thought, then we will have accomplished our mission. These sentiments help a child to always be self-motivated, to make constructive choices, to achieve their personal best in academics, and to find a sense of purpose in life. This foundation is exactly what they need most during their teenage years.” (The Progressive School of Long Island 2015)

Ananda Marga River School has been teaching neohumanism for 20 years and its mission is: “Our mission is to facilitate each child’s development to their highest spiritual, mental, emotional and physical potential.” (Ananda Marga River School 2015)

According to Sarkar:

““Education is that which liberates.”

The real meaning of education is trilateral development – simultaneous development in the physical, mental and spiritual realms of human existence. This development should enhance the integration of the human personality. By this, dormant human potentialities will be awakened and put to proper use. Educated are those who have learnt much, remembered much and made use of their learning in practical life.

In PROUT’s educational system, emphasis should be given to moral education and the inculcation of idealism – not only philosophy and traditions. The practice of morality should be the most important subject in the syllabus at all levels.

The sense of universalism should also be awakened in the child. Etiquette and refined behaviour are not enough. Real education leads to a pervasive sense of love and compassion for all creation.” (Sarkar 2010, Talks on Education – Excerpt F)

According to ECEC the aim of education is to allow a child to develop and to build a better world and according to Sarkar “Education is that which liberates”. The educational targets of ECEC and NHE are similar, both emphasize well-being and the best possible development of the child, but NHE seems to set its goals higher than ECEC. In my opinion the difference lies in the values behind the educational philosophy. It seems that ECEC has as a goal a person who is healthy, balanced and a good citizen living in a democratic, peaceful and prosperous country. NHE seems to have as a goal a person who is healthy, balanced and spiritually uplifted, living a life according to neohumanist values expressing themselves with joy and inspiration and actively working to build a global society based on universalism where all people, animals and plants are living together with harmony. In my opinion the NHE values and objectives are not contradicting with ECEC values and objectives rather NHE might have some new perspectives which could enhance the ECEC education. Next I will try to explore a few points of interest in connection with ECEC.

Universalism is a concept that refers to all beings living with harmonious and loving relationships with each other. In relationships between people it could mean the relationships between children, between children and staff in day care, hereafter referred to as teachers, between teachers and parents, between parents and children or between children, teachers and parents with other members of the society. It can also refer to relationships between children, teachers, parents or other people with animals, plants or inanimate objects in nature.

For playing, doing activities together, building friendships, developing social skills and developing a good self-esteem the relationships between children are very important. Bullying is not mentioned in the National Curriculum Guidelines but the need for a safe environment includes absence of physical and mental violence. The anti-bullying program for kindergarten age is based on the child’s right for a safe group and friendships. Bullying is using power to dominate and hurt others. Children need good

social and emotional skills, like empathy, problem solving skills and self-control to act in a group and kindergarten activities should help developing these skills. Adults are responsible for what happens in the group. Adults must be sensitive to children's feelings and see to it that everyone is included. The role of a teacher and kindergarten manager are very important in raising awareness to prevent bullying. (Kirves & Stoor-Grenner, esipuhe, 4-11, 24, 32-43)

In NHE teacher creates a classroom and school community where all feel belonging and mutual support and everyone is included. In NHE a teacher is an important role model who should embody selflessness, strength of character, leadership, service spirit and love for all life. In NHE the Cardinal Human Values and universalism, the feeling of oneness, are encouraged. The ten principles of Cardinal Human Values are Non-harming, Benevolent Truthfulness, Non-stealing, Universal Love, Moderation, Purity, Contentment, Service, Wisdom Study and Taking Cosmic Shelter. These principles of harmony with others and oneself can be used with children by practicing virtues which are led from them. For example Non-harming, not to harm others by thought, word or action, is explained to children as 'I like to Care and Be Kind' and as a practice of gentleness, kindness, friendliness, compassion and self-restraint (Anandarama & Brim 2010, 23-24, 62-65)

Bullying is a result of a power struggle between children. Adults need to be the leaders of the group and create an atmosphere where bullying is not allowed. Perhaps making clear rules based on Cardinal Human values, encouraging a loving outlook with universalism or helping children to experience harmony through meditation could help to prevent bullying.

Discrimination or bias because of gender, age, ethnic background, culture, language, religion, physical or mental health or any other reason is forbidden (Varhaiskasvatussuunnitelman perusteet, 2005). The bias or making a difference between oneself and the other is very common and it is not always easy to detect. It is important to try to remove any kind of bias from relationships between children, children and teachers, parents and teachers, parents and children and other members of society.

The Equal Early Childhood Education is based on three principles which are recognizing the generalizations and suppositions connected to gender, replacing the negative attention with positive and paying attention to small details. The aim is a society where gender does not dictate what individuals are like or what they can become. (Tasa-arvoinen varhaiskasvatus). Documenting in a kindergarten can help the teachers to notice and counteract gender bias (Kirves & Stoor-Grenner, 43-45).

In Helsinki an Approach to Multicultural Early Childhood Education is based on the ECEC guidelines of aiming at the child's benefit and it emphasizes ECEC partnership, teaching Finnish as a second language and training the staff. Multiculturalism is seen as cultural diversity, the coexistence of cultures. (Monikulttuurinen varhaiskasvatus)

The ECEC partnership means the mutual reciprocal interaction between parents and teachers. This partnership is guided by the principles of hearing, respect, confidence and dialogue. (Kaskela & Kekkonen, 2008, 5)

In NHE the harmful sentiments are the cause of bias and exploitation. The Principle of Social Equality states that everyone has the right to live and develop themselves to their full potential. In NHE students are taught to make judgements based on The Principle of Social Equality and to live by them. Developing an Awakened Conscience helps to detect and oppose acts based on harmful sentiments. The students are encouraged to become global citizens, to consider the whole humanity as their family and to develop love for all cultures. One's concept of what a human being is like influences one's deep feelings about themselves and others and also the way teachers relate to children. (Anandarama & Brim 2010, 78-81)

Again the aims of ECEC and NHE are similar in a way that both are trying to accomplish what is best for the child. Both have non-discriminatory outlook towards other people, but is there any difference for the child between having his own culture respected or loved? One could imagine that a culture which is loved would be welcomed and celebrated at the kindergarten and also shared with other people. A culture which is respected might receive less attention than a culture which is loved. Our view of the world affects the way we relate to the world. Recognizing the generalizations and

suppositions connected to gender is very important but is it possible that a teacher might give more freedom of self-expression to a child who is seen as a divine being having limitless psychic potential and an inherent desire for expansion than for a child who is a unique individual. The principles of ECEC partnership are similar to NHE approach. Hearing is empathetic listening with genuine interest and honesty and dialogue is an ability to think, speak and act together. These are not possible without a deep respect and caring for the other person. The responsibility for developing an ECEC partnership lies with the teacher. A teacher must be caring, emotionally balanced and mature with an empathetic understanding for others in order to be able to develop a partnership in the way Kaskela and Kekkonen explain (Kaskela & Kekkonen, 2008, 5).

The relationship between people and animals, plants and inanimate objects is reflected in people's attitudes towards ecology and sustainable living. Ecology and sustainable living are not mentioned in the National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland or National Policy Definition on Early Childhood Education and Care but the Core Curriculum for Pre-School Education in Finland states that pre-school education follows the principles of sustainable living and considers its social, cultural, economic and ecological dimensions (Esiopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet, 15.).

According to Luomi, Paananen, Viberg and Virta education for sustainable development is about giving and taking responsibility, for example personal experiences, learning outdoors, considering child's own interests and working together with parents and other communities support learning for sustainable development (Luomi, Paananen, Viberg & Virta, 2010, 7-9).

United Nations has a program of education for sustainable development where education is meant to empower people to take responsibility for creating a sustainable future. (Draft Unece Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development)

NHE promotes an awareness of ecology and sustainability through the realization of the interconnectedness of all beings and encourages respect and care for all living beings and the inanimate world (Anandarama & Brim 2010, 19). Bussey explains how neohumanism

can contribute to education for sustainable development by offering a new vision of human capacity and practical tools to implement it (Bussey 2008, 8-9).

Both ECEC and NHE agree that sustainable development and education for sustainable development are important. ECEC does not emphasize sustainable development very strongly but it is present in kindergartens for example in recycling. NHE has sustainable development inbuilt in its philosophy. NHE teaches children that each entity is a manifestation of Infinite Consciousness and therefore a member of their own family. NHE teaches children to expand their inner love to embrace the whole creation.

According to ECEC a child is curious, willing to learn new things and learns in a holistic way using all his senses. While engaged in meaningful and relevant activity a child feels the joy of learning and success. Safe relationships with other people provide the foundation for learning and having a positive attitude towards learning.

(Varhaiskasvatussuunnitelman perusteet, 2005, 18)

According to NHE the inherent nature of humans is to seek the Infinite, which is experienced as an immense joy, and therefore the pursuit of joy is the main motivation for humans. Infusing the learning process with joy encourages learning. Meditation helps to contact that point inside oneself which provides energy for our existence and learning. Joy is the essential factor in art and art can be used to bring joy to the learning process. In NHE the Fundamentals of Education are Absence of Dogma, Awakening the Thirst for Knowledge and Balanced Minds. Absence of Dogma means that education should be based on factuality and there should not be any superstitions, illogical or false notions. Intellect should be liberated with rationality from dogmatic and limiting views. By Awakening the Thirst for Knowledge NHE means providing an environment with possibilities for exploration and interaction, taking into consideration children's own interests and making learning process fun. By Balanced Minds NHE means freeing the child from distractions. Physical or emotional needs must be met and environment must be conducive to learning with loving teachers. Meditation helps to calm and balance the mind. (Anandarama & Brim 2010, 48, 89-90)

Both ECEC and NHE see joy as an important part of learning. NHE emphasizes the importance of joy in learning more than ECEC. NHE suggests ‘infusing the learning process with joy’ and ECEC states that a child ‘can experience joy while engaged in a meaningful activity’. Both ECEC and NHE agree that safe and encouraging relationships with teachers are a foundation for learning. Teachers should be sensitive to children’s feelings and encourage them to ask questions and to explore their environment. NHE also suggests using meditation and art to bring joy and to enhance learning.

The world view and the concept of education are different with ECEC and NHE and the difference is not only cultural. ECEC is based on the humanist thinking. Sarkar suggests to expand the humanistic vision to neohumanism by introducing spirituality as the base for education. NHE takes spirituality as a real force that brings joy and dynamism to life. The concept of spirituality as ‘realizing the interconnectedness of everything’ does not bind it with any particular religion or ideology.

Sarkar suggests that love is the solution to the problems of humanity and with this love he means universalism:

“A person who runs after petty objects of enjoyment to fulfil his or her personal desires lacks the spirit needed to unite humanity.Like any other problem, great or small, there is only one way to solve economic problems, and that is through genuine love for humanity. This love will give people guidance; it will show them what to do and what not to do. It is not necessary to study great numbers of books or to rely upon those who speculate with the future of the silent masses. The only essential requirement is to look upon humanity with genuine sympathy.” (Sarkar 2010, Social Justice, Published in: Discourses on Neohumanist Education [a compilation], 1959)

Sarkar sees his own vision as the hope for the future same way as many of the other philosophers and reformers of pedagogy before him saw their own visions as the hopes for the future. Some of the previous philosophies had the power to transform ways of thinking and to change the course of history and some of them were just forgotten after a while. Only time can tell whether Sarkar’s neohumanist philosophy will gain popularity

and change society but in my opinion it has a deep vision and a lot of potential and for that reason it is worth learning to know.

9.6 GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The fact that there are very little academic publications on neohumanist education or neohumanist philosophy makes it difficult to do research on them. Defining the concepts used in neohumanist philosophy and neohumanist education could help to get a clearer understanding of them. Documentation on practical early childhood practices could help to understand how this philosophy can be implemented in practical life and would provide material for further research. Interviews of teachers could help to understand their ideas and experiences of NHE. Interviews of former pupils could help to understand how they experienced NHE and how it has benefited them. Interview material and different kind of statistics can also be used for future research. Comparing neohumanist philosophy and neohumanist education with other philosophies and educational trends would help to find the similarities and differences with other thoughts.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Concordance for Liberation of Intellect: Neo-Humanism

Geo-sentiment = Favouring a geographical area at the cost of harming other areas and the people living in them

Human-sentiment = socio-sentiment including all people but violating the rights of non-human creatures

Inner psychic movement = existential awareness = human beings internal psychic movement is rhythmic and their experiences in the world are adjusted in that rhythm.

Neohumanism = expanding humanist spirit to universalism, practicing spiritual love towards all beings in the world

Principle of selfish pleasure = principle that motivates people to act in order to get pleasure for themselves

Principle of social equality = principle that states that every being in the universe has the right to survive and progress together with others. Every human being must be guaranteed with minimum requirements of life: food, clothes, housing, education and medical care.

Proto-spiritual mentality = A mentality which is a dynamic force working towards the principle of social equality

Pseudo-culture = culture which is degrading peoples mentality instead of uplifting them

Rationalistic mentality = A mentality which is based on rational thinking, gaining knowledge by careful study and making logical decisions for the benefit of all beings.

Socio-sentiment = Favoring a group of people at the cost of harming other groups of people.

Socio-sentiment maximitis = socio-sentiment including maximum number of people in other words all people also known as general humanism and human sentiment.

Socio-sentiment minimitis = socio-sentiment including a very small group of people for example members of one family

Sentiment = one way for the mind to work when guiding a person to act.

Universalism = the practice of a spiritually based love towards all beings

Universal religion = a religion which is free of harmful sentiments and allows the mind to work freely and devotional sentiment to develop.

APPENDIX II.

Here is an example of how the analysis was done. The quote was read carefully to find out how Sarkar describes the concept of universalism.

“A sound ideological base is a prerequisite for socio-economic groupifications. Such a foundation is provided by universal humanism, which has the potential to unite all humanity. Universal humanism will not be established on the hard crust of the earth overnight, but will come to fruition gradually, stage by stage. It will include each and every person in the world, as well as animals, plants and inanimate objects. If a single person remains outside the influence of universalism and becomes a victim of exploitation, then the foundation of universal humanism will be undermined. Hence, PROUT has adopted a rational method to solve socio-economic problems which may be characterized as universal in spirit but regional in approach.” (Sarkar 2010)

Here universalism is described as universal humanism which will include all humans, animals, plants and inanimate objects. Universalism is an ideological base for society and it has the potential to unite humanity.