

## Countering the neoliberal paradigm: A Pedagogy of the Heart from a Finnish Higher Learning Perspective

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### **Abstract**

*Finnish education and schooling has embraced the neoliberal model of education. No longer is the education system focused on social justice and social equality; rather, Finnish education and schooling has been remarketed into a more individualist mode of learning and schooling. This has especially happened in Finnish higher learning, as students are encouraged to quickly graduate through the rapid accumulation of credits. Learning that used to have an emphasis on the collective good is now seen as a model for work preparation as students are prepped as human capital for future employment. After introducing the neoliberal influence, this paper will offer a new perspective for Finnish higher education and schooling by presenting a pedagogy of the heart for consideration as a counter to the neoliberal model.*

**Keywords:** *pedagogy of the heart; neoliberalism; human factor; fear of freedom; education; schooling*

### **Introduction**

Finnish society has been in the midst of a sea change due to the transformation of ideologies. No longer is Finland a Social Democratic liberal state nor is it a Nordic Welfare State. Rather, from the beginning of the 1990's, Finland has embraced a neoliberal ideology that has at its center a pro-market mentality. This has had a dramatic effect on Finland's socio-economic policies, including the direction of education discourse, which has now been centered in the knowledge economy. The ultimate goal of such policies is to allow Finland to compete in the global economy. However, this sea change in policy has seen a dramatic decrease in the role of the state for the collective good; rather, the new buzz words are centered in individual responsibility, self-reliance, individual wellbeing, and entrepreneurship. The stress is now on individual choice where individuals are encouraged to be more responsible for their own individual life outcomes. The state, which at one point was the guarantor of social justice and social equality, now sees its

mission as a promoter of free market liberalism. Unfortunately, this has created a shift in government spending in times of economic crisis when Finland put funds into job formation, health care, social services and education. Thus, the Finnish age of controlled capitalism has all but disappeared from socio-economic life and the era of Keynes has all but ended in Finnish socio-economic policy (Rinne 1997, p. 15). The new unseen heroes of Finnish neoliberalism are Margaret Thatcher, Milton Friedman and Ronald Reagan. Indeed, both Thatcherism and Reaganomics have entered the Finnish socio-economic arena, as the public sector has become a new area of neoliberal management techniques that mirror its model on the private sector. The privatizations of elderly care, health care, and public services seem to be unstoppable. Such new public management stresses the need to cut public costs by allowing the free market to control the basic services that people need to feel secure in their life-world and to feel a part of the collective good.

Finland is also now a part of the neoliberal agenda. In this it is no different than other Nordic countries such as Sweden (Loeb & Wass 2014). Thus, as Steger & Roy state: “This neoliberal mode of governance would prove to be fatal for many social programs whose true benefits were observable only over the long term, and even then, were not easily quantifiable” (Steger & Roy, 2010, p. 44). Education is no exception to neoliberal governance. Unfortunately, Finland, which formerly based its education system on the Swedish social democratic model, has now succumbed to the neoliberal model (Rinne 2000). School closures due to economic streamlining have been a usual occurrence in the rural areas of the country, forcing children to travel at greater lengths to get to school. Furthermore, the neoliberal agenda for education has been all encompassing, focusing not only on public management but also on curriculum development (Rinne 2000; Kivirauma, et al. 2003).

The purpose of this paper is to stress the importance of a pedagogy of the heart for Finnish higher education learning. I refer to the ability of students to actively engage their life-world with concern and commitment. I also will stress the importance of embracing the “fear of freedom” to cut through the market centered approaches to higher learning and the importance for students to see the dignity of everyday life as learning becomes more life centered and more organic to the life process. The pedagogy of the heart that I will support in this paper will attempt to formulate a new approach to higher learning by offering a pedagogy that will have solidarity, justice and

fraternity at its center of education discourse. The main aim will attempt to confront the neoliberal ideology as it is now being implanted in Finnish Higher Learning situations. My understanding of the neoliberal influence on Finnish higher learning comes from teaching at a Finnish university for close to twenty years. I have seen first-hand the impact that neoliberalism has had on Finnish students during these years of ideological change and how this change has effected how knowledge is now generally imparted to the student in higher learning classrooms.

### **Winds of Change Approach the Finnish University Shoreline**

The Finnish university paradigm is also in the midst of change. The paradigm is now shifting toward an American version of an entrepreneurial university not just in curriculum practice but also from within the administrative structure. Such a university has been described by Anttiroiko as a place of “internal entrepreneurs”. As such, these individuals “engage in establishing spin firms and commercializing scientific research and utilize immaterial rights in the forms of patents and technology licensing”. (Anttiroiko 2014, p. 49) Thus, the university that was once seen as a place where the act of dreaming prospered and new ideas flourished has now become an institution where dreaming and ideas are commercialized (p. 49) and commodified.

The spirit of entrepreneurship has also trickled down to the students. No longer can they critically digest new ideas and put such ideas into reflective learning. Rather, Finnish students are now pressured to finish their learning as quickly as possible so that the university can receive the necessary operating funding from the state. As such, Finnish universities have become diploma factories where funds are given according to the number of degrees completed. The emphasis on degree completion has created a situation where students have become “academic entrepreneurs” because they are expected to graduate quickly and enter the workforce. This kind of “academic capitalism” is not focused on collective learning pursuits but rather on individual achievement where time allocation and learning efficiency take importance for student learning outcomes. Hence, the new Finnish university is quickly becoming an institution that “is more concerned with institutional transformational capacity, management of complex inter-organizational linkages, and the building of new entrepreneurial culture” (p. 49). In other words, the Finnish university is no longer a public institution but a corporate entity where internal affairs are put toward market mechanisms of profitability. This in turn, leads the Finnish university to more commodification and commercialization, especially in obtaining private

funding and just as importantly, in the university's "research, attracting talent and students globally, establishing overseas affiliations and campuses, and participating in alliances and innovation networks on a global scale" (p.37-38). However, where does the student fit into such a global university that seems focused on neoliberal ideologies? And why must students do neoliberalism in their everyday study life---a study life that is centered on fundamental goals and priorities that stress strategic learning marketability?

One factor in answering this question is related to the change of direction that Finnish universities took in structural development. At the turn of the century Finnish universities were forced to make various structural reforms. Such structural reforms changed the ideological direction of the university. According to Tirronen the "pragmatic turn from Welfare University, which emphasized university as a state institution, into Post-Welfare University" created a university structure that needed to be focused more on competitive structures (Tirronen 2014, p. 98). Since 2005 Finnish universities have been pressured to conform to neoliberalism. The Post-Welfare University is a university that focuses on fulfilling what the Finnish Ministry of Education desires. University strategy is now about competitive advantages modeling the private sector, mergers of universities and research units, priority funding, and a globalized learning based society (p. 98). The changes were drastic and yet, they faced very little opposition from university faculty, staff and the trade unions.

The lack of opposition to the university reforms and to the change in ideological direction should cause concern; however, it is perhaps understandable when one considers the ideological direction of the Finnish state and its stress on the lack of alternatives to neoliberal policies. For 25 years, since the fall of the Soviet Union, the Finns have been under a barrage of neoliberal propaganda of cost cutting and fiscal restraints. The Finnish people have also been experiencing their own shock therapy, thereby limiting their hostility to neoliberal changes in social and economic structures. This shock therapy has been centered on crisis navigation as society shifts from one crisis to another, putting what Naomi Klein stated in an interview with *Nation* magazine into active practice: "Only a crisis real or perceived produces real change" (Klein, 2007a). Certainly, the Finns have faced both real and imaginary crises throughout the past several years, thereby allowing free market ideologues, under a pretext of a lack of alternatives, a free reign to enact policies that would directly impact the everyday life of Finnish society. Thus,

according to Klein allowing “the elimination of the public sphere, total liberation for corporations and skeletal social spending”(Klein 2007b, p. 15), and as such allowed the neoliberal ideologues to free the market from state intervention. Certainly, such Chicago School policies have had a direct effect on Finnish higher learning institutions as they have also had on Finnish economic policy. As Klein states: “In every country where Chicago School policies have been applied over the past three decades, what has emerged is a powerful ruling alliance between a few very large corporations and a class of mostly wealthy politicians---with hazy and ever shifting lines between the two groups” (p. 15) seems to apply to Finland. The ghost of Milton Friedman can now be seen in practically every structure of Finnish economic, social, and education policy.

### **Neoliberalism comes to Finland**

At the moment the Finnish people seem to be living in the age where economic mechanisms are prevailing in many areas of the public sector. This can be seen in Finnish public discourse as public spending becomes a matter of cost cutting, encompassing a broad range of human services from health care to areas of learning. Almost daily, neoliberal pundits and politicians are extolling the virtues of fiscal discipline in the Finnish media. The buzzword is utilitarianism, where individual profit rules over the notions of social justice and social equality. The maximization of individual profit at the expense of community and solidarity values seems to have taken hold of various imaginations in the Finnish public sector. As Angela Davis states, neoliberalism requires the state to withdraw from the public sector, including education and health care and its distribution (Davis 2012, p. 146). As such, Finns no longer hear from public representatives the notions of the social contract, where the state is a force for the collective good. Rather, the Finns hear the spirit of competitive individualism mixed with notions of communitarian sentimentality, where people perform best when they compete with other human beings to get the maximum benefit for their own life quality while giving to certain charity organizations of one’s choice for the less fortunate. Finnish life seems reduced to economic imperatives signaling the end of Keynesian managed capitalism and allowing for a Finnish society that has been remarketed toward individualism and the free market. Thus, as Dowbor states in the Preface to Paulo Freire’s book *Pedagogy of the Heart*: “History reduced to economic mechanisms and all values subsumed by the realm of individual advantage,

conscience-bearing felt cornered into a pragmatic form of fatalism decorating their day-to-day lives...” (Freire, 1997, pp. 21-22). Freire saw such fatalism as a by-product of neoliberalism because the neoliberals feel the need to put the “there is no alternative” into their discourse; (Freire 1997, 88; Cole 2005, 103) thus, giving the impression that the socio-economic system cannot be transformed or changed nor criticized. (Freire 1997, p. 88)

Unfortunately, this cynical ideological fatalism can be seen in many aspects of Finnish society as marginalization, long term unemployment, homelessness, poverty, and other aspects of dehumanization are on the increase and yet, a clear majority seem to accept their oppressive situations (Kainulainen & Saari 2014, p. 39). For example, according to the Helsinki Deaconess Institute (HDL), an organization that provides support for youth who are at the risk of socio-economic exclusion, more needs to be done to help young people in need, especially for those young people who are unemployed and marginalized. Such young people feel more alienated from society and as such, developed a feeling of worthlessness and a sense of being underprivileged and disadvantaged (Alanen et al. 2014). Furthermore, the study claimed that for the bottom level of Finnish society, people’s wellbeing is getting worse, leading to states of loneliness and inactivity among the young people who feel left out of the education process (Helsingin diakonissalaitos, 2014). Such social problems have been addressed previously by the Finnish government through ‘education guarantee’ programs that sought to limit marginalization and exclusion in Finnish youth and in young migrants. (Ahola & Kivilä 2007)

These trends (as mentioned above) would seem to be in contradiction to the Finnish Nordic Welfare Model that was actively developed during the latter part of the last century. Finland was considered to be a very people friendly society because the Nordic welfare model created generous social benefits and services that stressed more justice and equality throughout the social structure. Such benefits as child support for all those who had children, good labor laws that offered protection to the worker, a universal health care system that was affordable to all, and free higher education that also gave students with a generous monthly stipend for studying and exceptional elderly care were just some of the policies that provided people with a sense of security and a feeling of wellbeing.

However the Washington consensus and its ten point policy recommendations (see Steger & Roy 2010, pp. 19-20) that began to be implemented in the early 1990’s in Finnish socio-economic

policy changed the social contract and replaced it with a neoliberal economic contract that emphasized a more limited role of the state, more privatization in elderly care and in health care, a loosening of labor laws making them more friendly to employers, and a lack of social funding for the people who are now being excluded from the road to free market prosperity. This has created a situation where the Finland of the Nordic Welfare State is now becoming barely recognizable. Thus, according to a recent study, many Finns are now predicting that their cherished state funded health care system will eventually become privatized, leading many to foresee a future where they will need to have private health insurance. Also, a clear majority of those interviewed saw shortcomings in the Finnish social security system, especially in nursing and elderly care (Horelli, Keitele, & Paunio, 2014). For example, one member of the Finnish parliament wrote in the English language newspaper *Helsinki Times* that elderly care has suffered due to the changes in public legislation. As such, the MP stated:

Typical problems plaguing the services include an imbalance between the supply of and demand for services, unclear division of responsibility between care providers, a shortage of rehabilitation services and a high number of mistakes taking place in the administration of medication. There are also huge regional differences in the availability and quality of care (Juvonen 2014, p. 4).

Although the research was conducted by a financial service organization, Washington consensus policies seem to be having a direct impact on Finnish lifestyle choices especially when it comes to health care as demonstrated by the increase in private hospitals, nursing homes, day care centers and health clinics. Washington consensus policies have also created a sense of survival of the fittest, giving Finnish society a social Darwinist tendency. This can be seen with people who are now suffering from depression. There are now hundreds of thousands of Finns who are currently prescribed anti-depressant medications but a clear majority of these individuals cannot get the needed psychotherapy treatments due to a lack of resources (Pharmacy News 2014). The lack of support for the vulnerable and the lack of concern of the Finnish government seem to place market imperatives before the needs of the Finnish people.

In Finland, we can take to heart the words of Foster & Yates when they stated: “Not since the Great Depression of the 1930’s has it been so apparent that the core capitalist economics are experiencing secular stagnation, characterized by slow growth, rising unemployment and underemployment”. (Foster & Yates 2014, 1) Accordingly they also state that inequality is in

epidemic mode under the governance of neoclassical economics and the goals of such economics to end such inequality “have collapsed before our eyes”(p.2). Finland experienced a deep economic depression in the early 1990’s (Saari & Kangas 2007, p. 155) culminating in an unemployment rate that reached 25-35 percent of the working population depending on the geographical area of the country. The depression gave rise to cuts in social policies in the form of “retrenchment and downward adjustments” (p. 155) impacting everyday life and Finnish schooling.

The economic depression sent a shock wave throughout a society that experienced a more or less full employment in the 1980’s. The shock that the country experienced allowed the Finnish shock therapists to change the basic nature of socio-economic life for the majority of the population (Rantanen 2003). Finland adopted the neoclassical style of economics, leaving social democratic liberalism behind. Thus, according to Juho Saari (2014), a Finnish professor of sociology was interviewed by the Finnish news organization Yle. Finland has become a society where close to a million people are now living in poverty or they are under the threat of being in poverty. Such figures are a dramatic increase from the 350,000 people that were living in poverty in 1995. In fact, from the year 1995 to 2005, no other country in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries saw a more dramatic increase in poverty as Finland did during those ten years (Saari & Kangas 2007, p. 155).

One reason for the change in political direction was the absence of ideological alternatives offered to the Finnish people. The Finns were given a consensus oriented ideological choice for a more market-centered approach to socio-economic concerns. (Rantanen 2003) Interestingly, this shift in ideological direction also affected the mentality of the young people at the turn of the century. For example, during the Nordic Model, the young understood the need for solidarity; however, the new situation had caused the younger generation to become more distrustful of the state as a provider of the social contract and as such, made the young more trustful of private insurance benefits. (Rantanen 2003)

However, it needs to be said that Finland did not act alone in creating such oceanic changes in its social policies. The idea of free and open markets and fundamental reforms to state power has also been experienced by other European Union countries, such as Great Britain (Callender 2012, p. 347).

## **Finnish Education Under a Neoliberal Umbrella**

At the turn of the century, the head of the National Board of Education of Finland gave the following explanation about why the old education model had to end and be replaced by the neoliberal model:

Well, I think that the general situation in society was mature for it that the welfare state had come to an end of its road in the sense that it was noticed that it is not possible to determine every possible thing by planning systems at the national level. In other words, this kind of belief in planning collapsed...and at the same time this subsidiarity got stronger in Finland. It was noticed that the local actors are able to handle their affairs better when they are allowed the freedom of move, and their ability to act is not fettered...One version of this subsidiarity is the breakdown of a unified culture. Finland has been an unusually monolithic country...it was confessed that there is no reason why a comprehensive school in Utsjoki (a town in scarcely populated Finnish Lapland) and one is Kulosaari (a suburb in Helsinki, the capital of Finland) have to function according to the same curriculum (quoted from Kivirauma et al. 2003, p. 180).

Unfortunately, Finnish education has not been excluded from such economic impulses. (Rinne 2000)The rise of neoliberal education in the Finnish education system in the 1990's (Rinne 2000; Ahonen 2006) and as a result, the social ills that came along with it can be seen in education policies and practices. No longer is Finnish education concerned with collective equality but rather with individual initiative and personal choice (see Kivirauma, et al. 2003, p. 181).This lack of collective equality and along with it the lack of understanding of social justice has given rise to the increase in student dislocation and marginalization, generating a sense of hopelessness and nihilistic tendencies which has been reflected in the rise of substance abuse and depression. Such dislocation and marginalization can be seen in the rural areas of Finland, where school dropout rates are higher than in the urban areas of the country. Furthermore, the neoliberal notion of individualized schooling has also given increase to the “demands of individuality” (p.181) putting the individual at the center of policy decision-making.

Thus, students are now considered as consumers of knowledge and not as subjects of knowledge. Consumers of knowledge must study for the test, memorize information and regurgitate such information in the classroom or in test taking—all in the understanding that one must succeed by moving quickly from one course to the next to harvest as many credits as possible in the shortest possible time. The focus is more on banking information rather than on seeing knowledge through a critical understanding of questioning and dialogue. To this end, the notion that

knowledge needs to be engaged, questioned, and challenged is sidelined for a more monolithic and deterministic education practice with power relations centered within the neoliberal understandings of power by putting market imperatives in the center of education discourse. (Suoranta 2008)

Furthermore, Finnish higher education is now seen from an instrumental point of view by a managerial class with ideological clout (Rinne 2000) where the number of student graduations is given prime importance because of funding issues; however, the dynamics of power, complexities and oppression and its impact on students' lives are not discussed or considered important. Rather, the disruptions of people's lives because of such instrumental policies are ignored and shelved through so-called prevention programs that lack financial resources to succeed. In addition, students are pressured to graduate quickly through the multi-tasking of courses where students feel compelled to take two or more courses at once in the hope of garnering the needed credits to secure their monthly financial stipend from the Finnish state.

One reason for these turn of events is the stress on profitability and efficiency so the student can graduate and begin her working life so the university can receive its money based on the diplomas completed. Moreover, the concentration on intensification, evaluation and measurement by the social security administration (Kela) and what this policy has had on a student's own self-worth by analyzing the number of credits that the student needs each month has had an impact on the mental health of Finnish higher learning students (Kunttu & Pesonen 2012). Unfortunately, the effectiveness of this kind of practice as experienced by learners underpins the exclusion and marginalization of not just the students who are now studying in higher learning institutions but also those who have been excluded from study due to poor entrance exam results or a lack of hope in the future.

In 2012 Kunttu and Pesonen, under the guidance of the Finnish Student Health Service, published the results of their study on the national health of Finnish students engaged in higher learning. The study showed that mental illness was becoming more common among the students since the year 2000. Also, 33% of all students had experienced considerable stress mainly because they seem not to be able to get control of their study and learning routines. Also, 20% of the students had problems with mood, planning for the future, and with personal finances (p.49). These authors conclude that some changes had occurred since the last study in 2008. For

example, the greatest changes occurred in confidence in the future and in their own personal resources (p. 50). The study shows that many students are having trouble seeing their way through the maze that has become higher learning. Neoliberalism is about doing politics in practice through small acts of living and learning. The politics is meant to instill a learning for a work mode of 'having' in the world, to the exclusion of being a reflective being in the world. Reflection requires an active engagement of the heart and how this heart relates to a more wholesome life world in higher learning outcomes.

The neoliberal way of learning is not only about doing politics but also about doing ideology. Interestingly, this ideology is hidden in the curriculum by having the students do ideology through everyday learning. It does not matter that such an ideology is accomplished by authoritarian means without the consent of the student who basically seems oblivious to doing such politics in the school. Freire stated, "A democratic style of doing politics, especially in societies with strong authoritarian traditions, requires concretely acquiring a taste of freedom". (Freire 1997, p. 52) Although Finnish society is not governed by an authoritarian tradition, it can be said that the way in which the neoliberal model was introduced into Finnish education was through authoritarian means since the grassroots of the population was not involved in the decision-making. The decision to change the education rudder toward neoliberalism came from policy experts, who implemented the neoliberal ideology one small step at a time until the education system reached the point of no return (Kivirauma et al.2003). The past system that was highly influenced by the collectivist Swedish model was replaced by the new neoliberal model of education with the social consequences mentioned above in this essay (Kivirauma et al.2003).

Interestingly, according to Kivirauma et al. (2003) the Finnish Board of Education knew of the possible social exclusion that young people would experience in the neoliberal paradigm when they were making the transformation to the neoliberal education system but they ignored the warning signs in favor of the new system founded in competitiveness and individualism (p. 185). This policy brought Finnish education to a new pedagogical dimension one of which put productivity and efficiency before people. However, it needs to be mentioned that the government at that time was also in an ideological shift from the Nordic Welfare State to a neoliberal state. The education system was in tandem with Finnish and EU policies (Kivirauma et al.2003, p. 184). Thus, the social transformation was drastic and cruel, regardless if known or

not among the population since large segments of the population (not just students) experienced a sea change in education policy and in public services.

Freire stated “When transformation is more or less imposed and its implementation is not followed by any effort or explanation about its reason for being, what results are blind obedience, immobilization, passivity, and fear”. (Freire 1997, p. 81) Writing from the late 1990’s, Freire brilliantly captured the Finnish mood and reaction to the dehumanization process that was occurring in their life-world during that decade. Freire struggled against capitalism because he considered it to be perverse and undemocratic by nature. He claimed that neoliberalism was insensitive “to the ethical dimension of existence” because it produces “scarcity within abundance”. (p. 88) In Finland this translates into a scarcity of resources where a society that should have plenty is suffering from a lack thereof. In addition, what needs to be mentioned is that the current generation of Finnish university undergraduates is the crisis generation because they have known very little but socio-economic crises throughout their entire lives. For example, in the early nineties when these students were born, Finland had been experiencing consecutive crises until the present time. These students have been through economic depressions and recessions condemning them to a life that can seem daunting and unchangeable. Thus, the ‘fear of freedom’ becomes a matter of life because neoliberalism has saturated the discourse with a ‘there is no alternative’ mantra thereby numbing any visions the students may have for the future and instilling not only a blind acceptance of neoliberalism but also of their own oppressions.

Freire has called this the ‘negation’ of the self (Freire 1997, p. 88) because the students are not beings in the world but seem to live outside their actual existence. He implies that bodies should be conscious in the world through an engagement with ethics---only then can “experiences of comparison, criticism, choice, decision, and rupture take place”. (p. 89) In the other words, it is through the ability of being an ethical human being that one can experience ‘the mark of freedom’ in this world (p. 89). It is through this “mark of freedom” that students can engage with the social decay that may surround them by actually confronting their own oppressions. However, the students must also lose their fear of freedom so that they can start the process of social change or transformation.

## **The Fear of Freedom and the Finnish Student**

Freire describes the ‘fear of freedom’ as one of the attributes of the oppressed because they have ‘internalized’ the laws and rules of the oppressor. Accordingly, they have accepted the oppressors’ guidelines in how to act and do life (Freire 1998, p. 48). Freire has called this ‘prescribed behavior’ because it focuses on the ‘prescription’ of the oppressor (p. 48). This brings to a better understanding just what Finnish students are now facing as they themselves have accepted such prescribed behavior for their own condition in Finnish society. What this infers is the blind acceptance of their own oppression because of their own fear of freedom in learning situations or a lack of knowledge of what exactly true freedom is. Thus, Finnish students must also recognize their own ‘situation of oppression’ if they wish to experience true freedom not just in the learning process but also in everyday life.

Furthermore, Freire details what needs to be done for Finnish students to set themselves free. First, they need to understand the cause of their oppression. Second, they will need to recreate a new circumstance for freedom to prosper and finally, they will need to engage in social action so that they can pursue “a fuller humanity” (p. 48). In addition, these three steps above will lead to a more humanized life-world where the oppressor can no longer lead from a base of dehumanization where the dehumanized circumstance can gain fruition. Rather, the students will overcome what Freire has called their ‘stifled humanity’ and lead the struggle for their own freedom because they are critically and collectively engaged in their own social existence to “regain their humanity” (pp. 48-49). For Freire, this is the reason for a pedagogy of the oppressed: students will be able to reflect and challenge oppression and seek a new alternative in the “struggle for their liberation” (p. 49). However, Freire also asks an important question around the topics of liberation, pedagogy and the oppressed. He asks: “*How can the oppressed, as divided, unauthentic beings, participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation?*” (p. 49)

One answer to this question is for Finnish students to develop what Freire has called a “critical consciousness” (Freire 1988, p. 19). An aspect of this consciousness is the ability to learn to see the various contradictions that face society at various levels of governance and life and to take some sort of action against the elements that may be considered oppressive toward species life (p.19). However, the fear of liberating oneself from various oppressive elements that may be causing oppression can be extremely strong because such oppression can be reassuring and give

a sense of security (p.20). Furthermore, the attempt to free oneself from oppression will not be easy because one must question actively the social, political and economic structure that surrounds the individual. Freire quotes Weffort when attempting to stress the importance of critical consciousness in the learning process: “The awakening of critical consciousness leads the way to the expression of social discontents precisely because these discontents are real components of an oppressive situation” (p.20). Thus, one way to overcome the fear of freedom is through a process of radicalization, which is nurtured by a “critical spirit”(p.21). Learning needs to become a questioning endeavor. The student’s critical spirit can be nurtured through the way she studies. For example, the Finnish student needs the skills to not just study critically but also too critically examine everyday life (Freire 1998, p. 212). The goal is to become “aware...of real life experiences” (p. 212). However, the Finnish student also needs to be radicalized from her experiences of everyday life.

Freire defines radicalization as a process which “involves increased commitment to the position one has chosen, and thus ever greater engagement in an effort to transform concrete, objective reality” (Freire 1997, pp. 21-22).However, this does not mean “creating a circle of certainty” which for Freire would create prisoners to that certainty (p. 23).In order for the radical to be engaged in human liberation, she must also be engaged with reality through knowing and doing, so that she can begin the process to change oppressive realities (p. 23-24).Thereby, she can begin to shed the fear to be free.

For Freire, the process of change is a slow process (Freire 1998, p. 212).Freedom that comes from a critical consciousness comes with life experiences and questionings. Thus, there must be qualities of humbleness toward ourselves, modesty in our temperament, respectful of others that we may come across on life’s path, and a daring to be different (p. 212).Furthermore, by incorporating such attitudes or ethics, Finnish students can not only begin to experience their own freedom but also they can begin to learn from other human beings through the process of dialogue (p.212).

### **Toward a Pedagogy of the Heart**

Mulgan (2013) stated that neoliberalism has at its heart exchange value but an alternative system should bring a “realization of meaningful time” which would include “lived experience” and “the

much longer cycles of biographical and ecological time” (p. 224). A pedagogy for the heart in Finnish higher learning situations would put the subject of neoliberalism at its center of discourse because by its very nature neoliberalism is the antithesis to the very foundation of the pedagogy of the heart. Freire in his book *Pedagogy of the Heart* made this very clear when he stated that capitalism was by its very nature perverse and against solidarity (Freire 1997, p. 88). He also elaborated about the unfair socio-economic relationships that can be exhibited inside the system-- a system that can create great wealth and yet, at the same time, create such hunger and poverty in the human race (p.88). Capitalism, which technically can be equated with the pedagogy of oppression, is by its very ideological foundation, ethically insensitive to species life (p.88). Thus, a pedagogy of the heart would need to be against the neoliberal paradigm both as an ideology and as a way of life for humanity to live and work by. Thus, students will need to be looked upon as ‘social investments’ so that they can live healthy social lives and not as capital investments for re-marketization (see Ridge 2012, pp. 388-389).

The pedagogy of the heart would put social justice, social equality, human rights and solidarity at the center of dialogue and discourse within a critical higher learning curriculum. Also, education and schooling have different orientations (Thomas 2013, p. 118). In this, education and schooling would need to be united in setting such a learning situation. For Yang, education describes “all forms of learning” while schooling refers to institutions that formally school people into “legitimated systems of knowledge reproduction” (Yang 2009, p. 455). In other words, education deals with the general aspects of learning while schooling is more specific to the institution. Thus, any curriculum that has human-centered values and ethics in its core would need to be incorporated within the general education of the Finnish population and not just to a specific school. Neoliberalism has basically incorporated both education and schooling into its ideological construct as students do schooling and educational practice not only in learning situations but also in doing everyday life.

The problem that any pedagogy of the heart faces would be to cut through the ideological bind that seems to incorporate education and schooling under a neoliberal umbrella. This is particularly true for Finland as the education system has been in the midst of change for several years (Rinne 2000; FitzSimmons 2014). Suoranta (2008) puts blame on the neoliberal model that has been applied to Finnish education for the lack of collective learning strategies in Finnish

higher education. He also sees a direct relationship between neoliberal management policies and individualized learning. In this sense, such learning implies memorizing information for the exam and studying non-reflectively (p. 711) because critical reflection and a good use of the imagination are often not required for the students in classroom learning practices (FitzSimmons 2014). Hill (2003) sees the classroom as a critical space for students to exercise their ability to use critique in the classroom. Such critique would focus on “existing society” and the active “search for alternatives” (p. 9). For the pedagogy of the heart to succeed in Finnish higher education such an ideological bind would need to be overcome by its practitioner. Furthermore, the fundamentals of the Finnish neoliberal education model (Rinne 2000) would need to be abandoned and replaced by a different pedagogy that has a different ideological perspective---a perspective that puts emphasis on the human beings ‘heart as an antithesis to the neoliberal metanarrative’s emphasis on “enhancing isolated individuals’ solitary competitiveness in a Darwinian struggle”(Freire 1997, p. 11).

Holmes made the observation that the basic problem that confronts humanity today is the idea that the free market can be self-regulating (2004, p. 351). The socio-economic problems that the Finnish people are now experiencing have much to do with a dependence on market imperatives. A pedagogy of the heart will need to address the reliance that the neoliberal ideology has on private markets and it will need to seek alternatives to such dependency. One way to seek alternatives is to focus on the intrinsic values of neoliberalism. For Chan, this idea is relevant because neoliberalism is “undemocratic, inequitable, imperialist, and unsustainable...It is intolerant not only of diverse human cultures and value systems but also of biodiversity”(Chan 2009, pp. 557-558). Obviously, a pedagogy of the heart would need to be democratic, equitable, anti-imperialist, and sustainable for species survival by putting nature before profit. Such values would need to be incorporated into the curriculum in tangible ways and not just superficially discussed for a feel good factor. Also, the pedagogy would accept diverse cultures and value systems and be ecologically green. This is pertinent for Finland because Finnish society is now becoming multicultural. Thus, the pedagogy of the heart is also a pedagogy of resistance and it is also a pedagogy of possibilities.

Chan quotes Mohanty at length in order to explain what such resistance may be and what such possibilities can be:

Resistance lies in self-conscious engagement with dominant, normative discourses and representations and in the active creation of oppositional analytic and cultural spaces. Resistance that is random and isolated is clearly not as effective as that which is mobilized through systemic politicized practices of teaching and learning. Uncovering and reclaiming subjugated knowledge is one way to lay claims to alternative histories. (Chandra Mohanty, quoted in Chan, 2009, p. 560)

A pedagogy of the heart will need to create self-conscious learners who will feel empowered to engage in ideological struggle against neoliberal hegemony that conceptualizes in various areas of public and cultural spaces. This also means that the pedagogy should also be concerned with a learner's social consciousness since acts of resistance will need to be a collective enterprise.

Furthermore, a pedagogy of the heart will need to embrace the political that occupies much of everyday life through small and large acts of resistance, especially in the classroom. In this sense, the pedagogy is also about creating possibilities for alternative knowledge so that students can question and consider different voices of interpretations. For example, such a pedagogy would need to expose “the assumptions behind the hegemonic criteria of efficiency, *putting forward alternative knowledges, and constructing global citizenship*” (p. 561, emphasis added). Through such acts of resistance, the process of self-actualization can occur so that the learner can steer herself into collective acts of liberation.

### **The Human Factor in the Pedagogy of the Heart**

The human factor is directly related to a pedagogy of the heart and it is also directly tied to notions of justice, equality, human rights and solidarity because all of these issues are relevant for humankind. The human factor is also at the center of the pedagogy as it creates the foundation with which the pedagogy is constructed. Furthermore, the human factor needs to be considered because such a factor is needed if education and schooling will become connected to global education justice. However, as Chan stated, global justice will also need to expand beyond the classroom and into previously ignored areas: street demonstrations, international finance and trade conferences, corporate think tanks, and in alternative social movements for change (Chan 2009, p. 561). Accordingly, the human factor seeks alternatives to lay the foundation for a living democracy where people are participatory in creating their own ways of being in the world and learning to be in the world (p. 561).

As such, the human factor will need to replace the corporate factor as being the main subject for advancement and deliberation. This will mean not only a radical change of direction for Finnish education but also for conceptual knowledge especially for societies that are gripped by corporate hegemony. This change of direction in education and in higher education schooling would need to put the human being and nature at the center of dialogue and deliberation. However, what direction would this change take ideologically and conceptually? The pedagogy of the heart will need to embrace a humane form of socialism because it is through socialism that the social can experience true freedom from the oppressive market forces that currently direct the Finnish education system. In other words, the pedagogy of the heart will bring a new social understanding to neoliberal education and schooling. But what is this new social understanding? Basically, it is the understanding that Finnish society needs to be ecologically, socially and economically sustainable to prosper and also be sensible in its decisions to exist humanely. By putting the *social* back into active Finnish education practice, schooling can begin to refocus its energy to allow the learner *to read the word and the world* (Freire & Macedo 1987) so that she can become a transforming agent in her community, thereby, making her the *subject* of her community.

Furthermore, a society that is prosperous and sensible will need to have an education system that focuses on humanizing the human being. The humanization of education is the prime mover for the pedagogy of the heart because it puts humanity as the subject of schooling. This would mean that testing would become secondary to allowing the student to question knowledge and to engage in critical consciousness raising in the classroom and in everyday life. Indeed, the Finnish student would need to learn to see her life through a critical lens so that she can engage the social commons and to understand the contradictions that govern her everyday life. Thus, the humanization of Finnish education is about putting “human enlightenment” and “human liberation” (Ayers et al. 2009, p. xii) into the learning curriculum. As Ayers et al. state: Education should create “thoughtful, strong, resilient, imaginative, and moral adults, people who can live productive, socially useful and individually satisfying lives. Classrooms and schools must become sites where young people envision, enact and renew democratic life” (p. xiii-xiv). What this will mean in practice is that Finnish students will no longer be looked upon as consumers and education will not be looked upon as a global export product to be bought and sold on the world market (Vincent 2013, p. 139). Rather, students and the education system that

they will participate in will ensure that they will become participatory citizens and critically rounded individuals (p. 139).

Thus, the human factor is directly related to the activating the human mind to engage every day realities. Furthermore, the human factor has nothing to do with the neoliberal attitude toward the learner that only transfers knowledge to the learner so that she can unlearn such knowledge through reinforced “pseudoneutrality” (Freire 1997, p. 46). Rather the human factor within a pedagogy of the heart would enforce the notion that the learner is an activist for human betterment and for collective global citizenship that places human imperatives in the center, while excluding the market imperatives so that the learner can seek alternatives to neoliberal practices (Chan 2009, p. 561) through acts of resistance and dialogue (Suoranta 2008).

### **Learning to Love**

The pedagogy of the heart is also about allowing the learner the freedom to love. One aspect of this freedom to love is fraternity with other human beings and with nature. Such love of people and nature would need to come from active practice and not just from learning what love is in the classroom. As such, learning to love is communal and fraternal because it concerns people loving other human beings and other species life. It is also focused on community involvement through volunteering in helping others in need. The pedagogy is about what human beings share in common in their ability to love by concentrating on those aspects of human nature that creates an altruistic social commons. However, certain questions will need to be asked and answered by the learner. These questions include: What is love? What does it mean to care? What is kindness? What is a just society? What does it mean to have a fraternal bond with other human beings and other species life? Such questions would need to be put up for questioning not just in schooling but also in how we human beings are learning to do everyday life. All this entails the freedom to express love as a form of engagement with humanity and other species life through emphasis on doing love. However three more questions will need to be debated and deliberated upon: why to love, how to love, and are we free to love. These questions are important because by answering them, a pedagogy of heart can take shape or form on a very human level and these questions can also create a framework for curriculum development centered around a pedagogy of the heart so society can become an organic endeavor. Cornel West stated it very simply and in very humanist terms. He stated: “Examining who, in fact, am I as a human being and how I can do better or

how can I strive to make a society that makes it easier for people to be good...” (West 2014, p. 1). What West said is basically a goal of a pedagogy that focuses on the heart.

However, such a pedagogy needs to be created in the lower grades and continue throughout the learner’s life so that the pedagogy becomes generational. Basically, since the ‘heart’ is lacking from the curriculum because of neoliberal influence, much will need to be done to replace the current vocabulary that is influenced by capitalism with a new vocabulary where the human being and nature is refocused behind a different way of doing life and learning. The learning vocabulary from the very beginning of the learning process will need to be more socially oriented and away from neoliberal instrumentalism which is centered on investment, capital, entrepreneurship, finance, efficiency, productivity, growth, structural reforms and the free market. Such capitalist vocabulary lacks human love and places the human being inside a cog that runs the machine of objectification where the learner learns to be an individual disconnected from her own humanity. Thus, the human being needs to be socialized through processes of humanization and not through processes of dehumanization.

Freire, in his book *Pedagogy of the Heart*, stated: “Only an education of question can trigger, motivate, and reinforce curiosity” (Freire 1997, p. 31). He emphasized the need to question in his education practice because he saw the process of questioning as a way to learner liberation. However, he also saw the questioning process as a way to increase curiosity in the learner’s life and he saw the importance of answering as forming a unity with the question. In other words an active questioning and answering form of education would create a good unified way of discovery. But both the question and the answer would need to focus on critical reflection and not on rote question and answer sessions. Learning to love is related to being curious in how society is functioning and behaving in its relationship with other human beings. So, the idea that learning should be mechanical and focused on memorization would be false. A person cannot learn to love others through memory but she can learn to love through “being with the world and with others” (p. 33).

The pedagogy of the heart is a constant learning experience. It is not based on stagnation but on motivation. It is restless and investigative by nature because the human heart is not sedentary but in motion being influenced by human circumstances. It requires the learner to focus on her own emotions toward people who may not be in ideal situations. Furthermore, the teacher is also very

much a part of the learning situation and is equal in the learning process with the learner. As Freire stated in his book *Teachers as Cultural Workers* about the task of the teacher: “It is a task that requires that those who commit themselves to teaching develop a certain love not only for others but also by the very process implied by teaching. It is impossible to teach without the courage to love, with the courage to try a thousand times before giving up” (Freire 1998b, p. 3). Certainly, Finnish teachers and learners will need to learn to have tremendous courage to challenge the current way of doing education and schooling under a neoliberal influence and they will need to struggle against the capitalized individual in debate, dialogue and deliberation.

What I am calling for in the Finnish higher learning process is a change in globalization strategy. Instead of a globalization process that supports a neoliberal economic system, and one that has a systematic effect on education by putting the human being in a “human capital theory” (Rizvi & Engel 2009, p. 533) we need a globalization process that puts the human being inside a human social theory. Rizvi & Engel state that human capital theory centers the human being inside an investment and training paradigm for competitive advantages (p. 533). It is also based in teaching the learner to be learned so that she can develop herself to be human capital through training programs and through private upgrade personal trainers. Rather, a change in the education global strategy will need to bring a new collaborative approach to education (see Nandy 2013, p. 73) that would lead students away from such neoliberal vocabulary usage that is used when education is for human capital development. A new vocabulary of the heart developed inside a human social theory would create a new vocabulary centered in schooling and education that focuses on nurturing the human spirit for everyday life so that human beings can regain their species being, i.e., the ability to learn about their social environment that they inhabit and if necessary transform it for the benefit of all species life (Holt 2015, 74). Accordingly Marx stated:

Man is a species being, not only because in practice and in theory he adopts the species as his object (his own as well as those other things), but---and this is only another way of expressing it---but also because he treats himself as the actual, living species; because he treats himself as a universal and therefore a free being. (Marx & Engels, 1978, p. 75)

Since the human being is a universal being and as such she wishes to be free to read the world and be in the world as a free universal being connected to nature as an organic whole, it becomes beneficial to be connected to the organic world as a living and caring species. In this, humans

can conceptualize love and learn how to use it in constructive ways. The Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe put it this way: “Our humanity is contingent on the humanity of our fellows. No person or group can be human alone”. (Achebe 2010, p. 166).

### **Teaching against Alienation**

Lefebvre made a good point when he stated that the human being is a being of nature but she also struggles against it regardless if linked to it (Lefebvre 2014, p. 200). It is this struggle against nature that can equate the human being into acts of alienation. In order to overcome such alienation the human will need to see their life to be in accordance with nature. However, Lefebvre stated that the entire life of a human being is “caught up in alienation, and will only be restored to itself slowly, through immense effort of thought (consciousness) and action (creation)” (p. 204). A pedagogy of the heart will need to link both consciousness and creation into an organic whole if educators and teachers wish to begin the process of humanization in education and schooling. The central focus must be on “ordinary people” and “everyday people”.

Lefebvre, who was focused in everyday life, saw this quite well. Accordingly, he advised intellectuals to “decommit themselves...from all the limited and immediate ways the times we live in are perceived; then, taking the lessons of action into account, *to take control of our era by grasping it in its totality...*” (p. 205). He was also convinced that action can enhance consciousness because it is through action that critical thinking can be guided to overcome the deception that inhabits everyday life or “human reality” (p.205). Although Lefebvre was commenting about the role of intellectuals, the same can be said for the ‘ordinary people’ and ‘everyday people’ that make up the greater portion of humanity.

A pedagogy of the heart will need to focus some of its theory on the dehumanization of the human being. One-way to do this would be for the pedagogy to concentrate on what Cornel West said: “to bring together head and heart and soul and body” (West 2014, p. 4) to create a well-balanced species being. This would require the human being to do a constant reexamination of daily life by turning the mind inside out when confronting the world. Thus, the pedagogy would encourage the learner in Finland to focus on the self in healthy and productive ways and not for self-advancement and self-efficiency. In addition, the pedagogy would encourage students in

common reflection, criticism, and interrogation in how the dominant ideology creates its own discourse for society to follow and engage in (see West 2014, p. 4).

As already stated, the pedagogy of the heart is a dialogical pedagogy and not a pedagogy of lecturing. It is philosophically Socratic because it is also engaged in a ruthless critique of everyday life so the human heart can find a common love for the disenfranchised, marginalized, and the alienated social beings that may pass by unnoticed and unloved by the ordinary and everyday human beings. The classroom can become a marvelous place of reconnection to the human race and other living species if dialogue and questioning become the dominant way to deliberate knowledge. In this, the pedagogy follows a Freirian perspective when it comes to the banking style of teaching where the educator lectures and the learner listens or as Freire states “In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (Freire 1988, 58). Thus, for the pedagogy of the heart learning is centered on the ability of the teacher and the learner to critically dialogue their way through texts (see Fromm 1980, pp. 43-44). Knowledge then becomes a form of “invention and reinvention, through restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry that men pursue in the world, with the world and, with each other” (p. 58). Furthermore, the educator and the learner are seen to be thinking beings capable of “mutual humanization” (p. 62) in the learning process.

## **Conclusion**

The pedagogy of the heart places the student at the center of the learning process. Its central focus is on the humanization of the human being and on bringing the human being closer to nature and other species life. The pedagogy is also concerned with oppression and the necessity of the oppressed to take charge collectively of their own oppression and transform such oppression into acts of collective liberation.

This in itself is very important because the dominating elites of neoliberalism know that their own neoliberal ideology is a collective enterprise on behalf of and for a select minority of neoliberal ideologues. As such, the pedagogy of neoliberalism is placing the student outside the learning process by equating education and schooling as exchange value for profit and individualization. There is also an intensified exploitation as the Finnish student's value comes

from her diploma and not from her engagement with real knowledge that could add to her value as a citizen.

In addition, neoliberalism and its education process are centered on profit and accumulation when it comes to the knowledge that is being produced and how it is produced. It places education and schooling at the behest of big business where finance and investment takes prominence over the student and her emotional and social wellbeing. Neoliberal learning becomes a learning of memorization where the student must memorize the knowledge required by the educator. It places the student as an object and not as the subject in the classroom and allows the student to be disempowered by silencing her voice and deadening her mind. Also, neoliberal education places a strong emphasis on individualism and the market forces, which have generally gone global.

However, the pedagogy of the heart is an alternative to neoliberal education. It places value on co-operation, social solidarity and social justice and equality within the realm of the classroom on how knowledge is produced and delivered to the learner. Knowledge becomes an agency for change and for empowerment because it is meant to enhance the critical human being and her place in a participatory community. Basically, the pedagogy is one that allows for a more collective oriented community that places a collective provision on what constitutes a good and healthy social provision for the society at large. This social provision would include education, health care, elderly care, child support, and youth programs. All of the above would constitute a break with the neoliberal ideology of self-interest and individual competitiveness because such self-interest and individual competitiveness would be detrimental to species solidarity.

Furthermore, the pedagogy of the heart is socialist in orientation. Good education as with good politics is concerned with managing society well and in creating a portrait of a good community (Kerry 2013, p. 39). However, it is also concerned with dialoguing with people on how to create such a good community not just in the education and schooling process as people debate and deliberate ideas but also in the social commons as people participate in a more social oriented participatory democracy. In addition, an alternative ideology to the neoliberal ideology would need to put on the table for deliberation and this alternative should not have a capitalist center from which various off shoots of capitalism can emerge. There will need to be a new socialist way, a way that can confront the idea that capitalism can become more socially responsible (see

Hattersley 2013). The pedagogy of the heart will need to offer a genuine ideological alternative for a richer understanding of what citizenship means for the social commons.

Finally, democratic citizenship has a collective vision whereas neoliberal consumer citizenship has a more individualist way of doing everyday life (Flinders 2013, p. 85). The collective vision that the pedagogy of heart espouses ensures that learning will nourish and nurture the learner as she rediscovers her collective heart and space inside her own humanity for others and for other species life. In other words, the democratic citizenship that the pedagogy of the heart offers learners will allow people to share in each individual's mutual destiny through a democratic socialist vision (see Newman 2005, pp. 144-145).

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Dr. Robert FitzSimmons (PhD in education) has worked as a university teacher at the University of Lapland for close to twenty years. His doctoral research *Toward a Critical Revolutionary Pedagogy: inquiries into Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Mao Tse-Tung & Fidel Castro* (FitzSimmons 2004) examined the role that the revolutionary pedagogical core can play inside critical revolutionary pedagogy. His main research interests are in critical pedagogy.