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REFLEXIVE PEDAGOGY AND THE ACADEMIC HERETIC

ANTHONY JOSEPH*

Abstract

The challenges to education-lacking homegrown traditions of scholarly criticism from its early institutional forms and now enmeshed in a global free market determinism, trumpeting ambiguous visions for a new India-are compounded by vacuous utilitarian policy imperatives. A critique of CBET and groupthink is offered as example of the dominant narrative of neoliberal market ideology impacting knowledge and education. The paper posits the reflexive teacher educator as academic heretic-the idol of enlightenment, discovery and resistance-as a useful frame to analyse the epistemologically specious and ideologically unsound challenges facing education. Reflexive pedagogy and the academic heretic are proposed not as fixed definitions, but as a pluralistic, reflexive, interpretive approach to stimulate dialogue, to engage with the tensions of traversing the ethically-bankrupt technocratic management of educational endeavours. The paper offers reflexivity and reflexive pedagogy—a philosophy for and of education—to counter the rapacious onslaughts of neoliberal economics, and the need for reflexive teacher educators through a deeper critique to locate learning in the larger arena of mind and spirit. This paper positions the possibilities of reflexive teacher educators to identify and challenge prevailing orthodoxies and to voice their potentially 'heretical' views about education in the 21st century.

Keywords: Academic heretic, CBET, Groupthink, Reflexive Pedagogy, Teacher Educator

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I. Introduction

> 'We receive three educations, one from our parents, one from our school-masters, and one from the world. The third contradicts all that the first two teach us.'
>
> – Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (1689–1755), French political philosopher

As Covid-19 disrupted schools in India and the world over and parents occupied a front-row seat into their children's schooling—armed with little more than an unfettered media consumption and its gratuitous and sensationally skewed perception of the present—most had questions. Big questions. Despite the immediate fears that the lockdown would disproportionately affect schoolchildren in the rural areas, in India and across the world, low-income parents fondly continue to hope that their children's education will bring for them a better life. Most of them are often ignorant or avoidant of the excesses against the most vulnerable, perpetrated by educational authorities, legitimated via a paternalistic definition of 'the public' and crafted to succeed only where education and knowledge is heavily dependent upon the centralisation of authority. Despite the rhetoric of improvements in infrastructure, availability and access, more than half the students will never graduate and many will face a life of poverty-wage work. It is becoming increasingly clear that the current educational system bereft of a unifying narrative panders to the false gods of economic utility, consumerism, ethnic separatism and resentment. The dissonance between scientific ideals, democratic values and prejudiced practices have often been theorised in terms of the indeterminate work-in-progress of the project of Indian modernity as well as the parochialisation of educational institutional setups (Altbach and Balan 2007; Kapur 2011; Beteille 2010; Tukdeo 2015). These inchoate split narratives have served to fuel growing systemic instabilities, giving rise to new and potentially catastrophic situations that pose serious threats to the capacity of human populations to maintain themselves in a sustainable environment.

Globally, the late 1960s and the early 1970s was a period of unprecedented economic expansion and there emerged an ethos of education as development. In the mid-1970s, economic expansion began to wane. In this new climate of economic austerity, the government sought to replace educational innovation with back-to-basics curriculum. Since the end of the 1970s, and now into the 21st century, educational institutions the world over

have become victims of conservative educational policies that go under the name of neoliberalism. Within the neoliberal mandate, key sectors of health, welfare, and education are increasingly being delivered by governments into the hands of market forces and its directives (O'Sullivan, Morrell and O'Connor 2002: xvi). Saddled with a nascent formalised system of vocational training, and the inability of the public Indian education and training system to prepare young people for the world of work and for the requirements of the employment market, systems of power and privilege—structured around class, race, and gender—can easily exploit a leading industrialised nation with a very young population and a high demand for a skilled workforce.

India has one of the youngest populations worldwide. Given its high birth rate, this number is bound to increase. In 2021, about 66 per cent of the population will be between 15 and 59 years old and thus at an employable age (World Bank 2013); 70 per cent of all Indians will be at an employable age by 2025. The challenges and opportunities are hard to ignore—this 'demographic dividend' could also change quickly into a 'demographic disadvantage' (Mehrotra 2014), related to the huge challenges to qualify potential workers appropriately in order to participate in the nation's growth and to generate prosperity and satisfaction (Hajela 2012; Agrawal 2013). Educational changes in India over the last few decades have occurred outside the visions and orientations of the National Education Policy; this should be a cause for concern. The gloomy prognosis—pessimism, populism, polarisation and collapse—appear to be the horizon of our generation.

It is fairly common knowledge to both past and present policy makers, teacher educators, as well as many trainee teachers, that what is offered as 'educational theory' has little direct or immediate application to classroom practice and academic learning; this therefore has no serious role to play in the professional development of teachers. Economic imperatives stemming from myopic policies have eviscerated the agential role of teachers and reduced the teacher to yet another economic agent straightjacketed by corporate interests to privilege economies of scale. The emphasis on the state has shifted in order to give way to 'new globally defined economic and social goals and agendas that are [in] consonant with the ideological shift from liberalism to neoliberalism' (Velaskar 2010: 61). Absence and obfuscation greet any recourse to national policy trajectories of

educational reform. Policy discourses as forms of social practice are subject to particular rules and transformations through which particular representations of 'truth' and self are constructed within particular power relations (Ball 1994). They work to define not only what can be said and thought but also about who can speak, where, when and with what authority (ibid.). In understanding social reproduction in schooling, a number of scholars have, in recent years, highlighted the issues of internalisation of social prejudices by students, and displaying of obedience and limits of student voice in educational institutions (Thapan 2014; Rampal and Mander 2013; Vasavi 2016; Hickey and Stratton 2007). It comes as no surprise that policy discourses on teacher professionalism or teacher quality define both what a professional teacher should be like as well as what quality teaching can and should be (Leaton Gray and Whitty 2010; Thomas 2011). Education easily appears to be the sole sociocultural tool to refine authenticity and promote the development of capabilities and grit in individuals to rally against the exacerbation of inequality. Yet, leading advocates and critics will concur that the inherent 'directiveness' in education renders it non-neutral, and hence 'knowing' is hardly a neutral act. When Apple, a critical pedagogue, postulates that traditional education is not neutral but it is political, designed to advance the interests of the groups in power and privilege (Apple, 2012b), he lends credibility to Freire (1987: 46, 129) 'Teaching is not the lever for changing or transforming society. Formal education ... cannot really be the lever for the transformation of society'.

Contemporary educational practice and policy is rife with reforms. Finnish educator Pasi Sahlberg (2011), describes these globally popular reform strategies as 'GERM'—the Global Education Reform Movement: standardisation, a focus on core curriculum subjects at the expense of areas such as creative arts, risk-avoidance, corporate management models, and test-based accountancy policies. These prevailing strategies as pervasive insidious orthodoxies announce the neoliberal dream of deregulated, compliant, market-responsive knowledge creation. In language that assumes moral and ideological neutrality, market discourse crafted by futurists speaks little of social values and norms which education inherently transmits and yet is instrumental in casting aspersions on the role of the states to rediscover and rearticulate public good in learning and knowledge. Elements of GERM in the contemporary Indian educational practice and policy are a complex set of legislative

entanglements signalling new dependency regimes (Sadgopal 2003; Brock-Utne 2000; Spring 2006), ushering in of privatisation (Tilak 1997; Kamat 2002; Mehrotra 2006) and consensus building in support of neoliberalism (Hill and Kumar 2011; Ball 2016). In India, given the absence of large or small movements and public policy responses and strategies that may generate any hope of educational reform to ensure equality and social justice, what alternative strategies can we use to instill within ourselves and our children a sense of global citizenship, healthy intellectual skepticism, respect of India's traditions, and appreciation of its diversity?

In the face of a profusion of knowledge and information, challenging assumptions about what is most essential to teach, and a growing cultural diversity challenging the established canons of knowledge and belief that have underpinned the curriculum, schooling is becoming assailed by disputes and uncertainties. Changes in government schools are too obvious to miss in the past decades (PROBE 1999; Saxena 2012; Batra 2005; Majumdar 2004; Balagopalan 2011). When viewed alongside the pressures of a growing societal reliance on education, government reviews of educational research and the profession's own analysis and response raises a number of possible implications and/or questions for researchers in teacher education. For example, 'is the direct application to practice the sole purpose of academic or theoretical reflection in teacher education?' or exploring, 'how when teachers reflect on practice they also engage in epistemic cognition, a set of mental processes that involve the development and employment of one's conceptions of knowledge and knowing' (Greene, Sandoval, & Braten 2016; Hofer & Pintrich 1997) and 'when' teacher educators seek out opportunities to interrogate the assimilated perspectives of educational beliefs, contexts and practices, lived experiences, this paper posits, could well be the purview of a reflexive academic heretic. Teacher education requires new educational practices consistent with the content. Practice theory provides teacher educators a conceptual room for reflexivity. As carriers of practices, individual agents are 'neither autonomous nor the judgmental dopes who conform to norms: They understand the world and themselves, and use know-how and motivational knowledge, according to the particular practice' (Reckwitz 2002: 256). In practice theory, reflexivity is an important quality of a practice because its ongoing performance requires constant adaptation to new circumstances 'so that practicing is neither mindless repetition nor complete invention' (Nicolini 2012: 5).

The language and practices of the market now saturate our technology and modern day life and continue to usurp systems of power and privilege structured around class, race, and gender to reshape human community and environmental values. In this maelstrom we are all vulnerable and yet, exploring vulnerabilities is a critical component of reflexivity and the honest critique of ideas which are the cornerstones of democracy. In the face of such vulnerabilities, two questions raised of contemporary Indian education policy and practice are 'is it fair?' and 'does it work?' The importance of these questions is subsumed by 'who is best positioned to raise these questions?' Taking such epistemological, emotional, and personal risks is not easy for one circumscribed in the vulnerabilities of the teaching learning profession. This paper positions and explores the possibilities of reflexive teacher educators to identify and challenge prevailing orthodoxies and to voice their potentially 'heretical' views about education in the 21st century; we argue that for the reflexive teacher educator vulnerability can be an asset in developing understandings of self-cultivation, relating to others and engaging in systems as critiques of contemporary education policy and practice and consider the purpose of critique (or 'heresy'), and to explore the possibilities reflexive pedagogy offers for this kind of academic work at a time of uncertainty and change for school and university research and teaching. Reflexive explorations of vulnerability offer a path to building empathy and creating engaged generosity within a community of dissensus. This kind of reflexivity is essential in a society shaped by 'new instrumentalism ' or the 'utilitarian turn' in which democratic participation often degenerates into neoliberal silos of discourse and marginalisation of others who look, think, and believe differently. Where public education enables the development of citizens and not consumers, to engage in social and community-oriented democratic processes, reflexive teacher educators are strategically placed to position dialogue, albeit heretical (informed critique) informed by reflexivity, as fundamental to the construction of knowledge and education for survival, critical understanding and integral creativity.

This paper is predicated on the conviction that informed critique (heresy) is a necessary accompaniment to developing and sustaining learning in the larger arena of mind and spirit. The academic project of this paper constitutes a defence of the community and social bonds within which schools and universities have been conceived, legitimated, and grown; that

which is 'heretical' exists only in claims that are definitively and provocatively anti-social, and anti-community.

II. Academic Heretic

> 'All intellectual activity can be seen as terrorism against established canons, whether science, culture or sociology.'
>
> – Ulitskaya 2011: 178

> 'Heresy is the dislocation of some complete and self-supporting scheme by the introduction of a novel denial of some essential part therein
>
> – Belloc (1938) 2011: 5

In the 21st century, as in the 1950s or 1970s, heresy is somewhat in the eye of the beholder. The words renegade, dissenter and heretic have an archaic or religious sense and modern day figurative sense which is likely to have derived from religious spheres. In modern usage, the word heretic is used either to express extreme distaste for the dissenter's view (they're so wrong that it's as bad as heresy) or to imply opinions quite contrary to the established orthodoxy, so much that the mainstream view from which they dissent is like a religion. From Galileo to today's amateur astronomers, scientists have been heretics and rebels. Academicians much like artists and poets, in their pursuit of truth as free spirits are guided as much by imagination as by reason. They resist the restrictions their cultures impose on them. Little wonder then that their greatest theories have the uniqueness and beauty of great works of art. The academic project of this paper constitutes a defence of the community and social bonds within which schools and universities have been conceived, legitimated, and grown; that which is 'heretical' exists only in claims that are definitively and provocatively anti-social, and anti-community.

The continuing social domination of capital, evinced in the capitalisation of humanity, persists in the redefining of human capabilities as labour power and poses a threat to the key philosophical bedrock in public and social trust which educators have for centuries been able to engage with decisive responsibilities for the intellectual and practical conditions of such trust. Recognising the perversion in the form of agency, aimed at the displacement of the human, reflexivity in teacher education calls on teacher educators as

academic heretic to embark on rediscovering and rearticulating public good in teaching, learning and knowledge.

Systems of power and privilege structured around class, race, and gender have served to dislocate learning from the larger arena of mind and spirit, an orthodoxy few venture to engage with. Discourses of exclusion and cultural politics in education are rife in our socio-political environment. This paper positions the possibilities of evoking in reflexive teacher educators essentially radical, provocative and unorthodox views on social, political, economic and cultural issues; to identify and challenge prevailing orthodoxies, concerned about their potential to entrench inequality and to dampen real curiosity but not without faith in their possibilities and to voice their potentially 'heretical' views about education that strives to locate learning in the larger arena of mind and spirit.
Teacher educators as academic heretics appear to have their work cut out—Competence-Based Education and Training (CBET), Evidence-based policy (EPB) and groupthink, are some of the epistemologically specious and ideologically unsound shibboleths wrapped in an ethos of economism and purported to foster nation-building.

EPB is a major shibboleth of the current era which more often than not precariously hinges on spurious objectivism and unproblematised epistemology, effectively designed to privilege certain forms of research and knowledge over others, in ways redolent with instrumentalism and the utilitarian turn. Simply put, … there is no 'scientific method'; there is no single procedure, or set of rules that underlies every piece of research and guarantees that it is 'scientific', and therefore trustworthy (Feyerabend 1982: 98, see also Feyerabend 2011: 112–113).

As academic heretics teacher educators are up against a major transition, an ethos of economism masquerading as nation-building. Critical to the analysis is the technocratic character, whereby goals are simply adopted, co-opted, and implemented in the most efficient manner, without reference to discussions about ends or values, neither the epistemological, nor the policy processes supporting such ambiguous and insidious ambitions.

The ubiquity and speed with which philanthropic and private corporates continue to redefine public and social spaces, goods and services, spurs the academic heretic to recognise the notion of the 'social good' becoming increasingly marginalised: it has become a 'buried discourse' (Pusey 1991: 166), replaced by an economistic rhetoric of individual rights, ideologies of 'efficiency', and 'choice'. Pusey (ibid.: 11) pointed to the neutralising effects of this transition:

> What wins is a kind of "dephenomenalising" abstraction that tries to neutralise the social contexts of program goals in every area, whether it be education, industry support, public health or water resource management.

The reflexive academic heretics risk their lives by interrogating 'orthodoxy' or neoliberal silos of discourse and marginalisation of others who look, think, and believe differently. Contemporary reflexive pedagogy shares a surprising historical context—the rich but oftentimes unrecognised literary and philosophical tradition that has existed for nearly two centuries. Arguably, one could trace current reflexive thought through some of the greatest minds of the 19th and 20th centuries—William Blake, Mary Shelley, Charles Dickens, John Ruskin, William Morris, Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Robert Graves, Aldo Leopold, and many others—if one were to argue that modern protests against consumptive lifestyles and misgivings about the relentless march of mechanisation are part of a fascinating hidden history. The reflexive tradition can yield important insights into how we might reshape both technology and modern life so that human, community and environmental values take precedence over the demand of the machine.

The paragraphs that follow will illustrate how CBET and groupthink—handmaids of economistic rationality—entail the reflexive engagement of academic heretics.

III. Competence-Based Education and Training (CBET)

'What matters is what works.'

– New Labour, c. 1997.

Political authorities and the emerging business classes have displayed an ambivalent interest in the unprecedented emergence and expansion of academia into new forms of

economic and cultural significance. Divisive forms of capitalism—premised on the capitalisation of humanity recognise the need for increased technical specialisation for production, trade and the creation of new markets—privilege competence and performance and promote a global free market determinism. Teacher and teaching competence readily lend themselves to competency frameworks and performance assessment. In the field of education, the key driver for competence initiatives worldwide is to 'align education with the world of work' (Mulder 2017b: 1076) whilst being applicable to any aspect of education and life skills more generally (ibid.: 1087). CBET, founded in the performance-based teacher education movement, gained prominence in American educational circles in the 1960s (Hyland 1994: 1). It was not known as CBET then, but was more properly known as performance-based education, or performance-based teacher education (PBTE). The competence movement today is a global innovation which is 'more alive than ever' (ibid.: 1072).

Performance assessment in education envisions the full capitalisation of humanity (Rikowski 2002) and constitutes the human as merely a vessel for the production of labour power with no regard to consciousness or resistance, designed to cage, or capture humans, bereft of every freedom of action. For instance, for decades the guiding principles of Ashram schools in the adivasi regions of Maharashtra, declared in no uncertain terms that the main objectives of the schools is to 'rescue the Adivasi communities from the surroundings of poverty, superstitions and alcoholism' (Government of Maharashtra). As a result, teaching and learning today is viewed as disconnected from the liberal/humanist assumptions that dominated education since the Enlightenment. Social forces, aided and abetted by capitalism, help unleash PBTE / CBET and its pernicious effects to every aspect of education from initial schooling (Sornson 2016) to higher education. Sornson (2016: 130–138) sees a revival of CBET throughout the education system including a return to this method in teacher education.

Returns on investment in R&D are potential game-changers for governments. Currently, technological innovations the world over appear to craft and determine the scope of higher education. Massive Open Online Courses, while arguably devolving the cost of education to the point of consumption, have succeeded in reducing learners to consumers.

Techno-savvy entrepreneurial educators collaborate with software corporations and designers to rake in significant returns, leading to other academics becoming residualised, under-employed academic labour (Rea 2013; Brown 2011; Martin 2004). CompetenceBased Education and Training that supports myopic and distorted views of competency frameworks through performance assessment in education, this paper posits, aids and abets in the de-professionalisation, alienation and loss of professional autonomy and identity of the teaching learning community endowed with complex, diverse and dynamic belief systems and mindsets. The emerging rendition of quality (see Kumar and Sarangapani 2004), viewed alongside terms of learning guarantee, teacher accountability and the scientific management of education, is antithetical to the understanding of quality seen as being integral to the concept and process of teacher education. Existential doubt among a majority of teacher educators, 'being relevant' about their expertise, or even being articulate about what is exciting in scholarly endeavour (Brown 2011) is a vicious trap.

IV. Groupthink

A scientific understanding of groupthink appears to hold valuable insights to engage with much of what is disturbing about the world today in general and teaching and learning in particular.

> 'When everybody defers to everyone else's judgment, nobody thinks for himself. And so perhaps the most unfortunate aspect of the trendy curriculum is that it trains students to think with the herd, rather than to think critically. The new curriculum may be described as the product of an echo effect, in which different people in the Stanford community, faculty and students alike, repeated one another's claims until so many people make the same claims that everybody believes them. Such conformity can be psychologically overpowering, but it does not promise to yield the truth or to communicate anything significant.'
>
> -David Sacks and Peter Thiel, *The Diversity Myth* (1995)

Various interest groups, journalists and even governments in the 21st century have covertly or overtly subscribed to and serviced 'groupthink', a way of thinking, with deeply disturbing results leading to countless errors in judgement and the division of society into highly polarised, oppositional factions. Booker (2020: 14) defines the three

rules of groupthink as: i) the adoption of a common view or belief not based on objective reality; ii) the establishment of a consensus of right-minded people, an 'in group'; and iii) the need to treat the views of anyone who questions the belief as wholly unacceptable. The remarkable effects of groupthink and its influence on our society are worrying—George Orwell's 'newspeak', the 'other', new forms of 'puritanism', a culture of 'fear' and 'majoritarianism' appear to be the grist to groupthink. The thoughts, words and deeds of groupthink are wasted if they do not find mainstream traction, therefore the quest for the elusive label of 'prestige' is assiduously sought and secured.

> Great power is given to ideas propagated by affirmation, repetition and contagion by the circumstances that they acquire in time that mysterious force known as 'prestige'. Whatever has been a ruling power in the world, whether it be ideas or men, has in the main enforced its authority by means of that irresistible force we call prestige.
>
> – Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd*

Reflexive academic heretics, drawing on countless examples throughout history can seek to unravel underlying causes to understand and shed new light on the remarkable power and sinister effects of 'groupthink', and its insidious influence on all aspects of our society.

V. Learning or Teaching

> '… the search for certainty is indeed literally a Kinderkrankheit.'
>
> – Feyerabend, letter to Lakatos, 27 December 1974

NEP 2020 introduces, among its primary objectives, the promotion of 'lifelong learning opportunities for all'. This is in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030. In its own words, as per demands emerging in the international market, it is imperative that young Indians 'not only learn but, more importantly, learn how to learn'. Even to the casual reader, it is hard to ignore what appears to be a dramatic shift from the learning declared in the very first page to exclusive claims to teaching outlined towards the end of the same document. 'India will be promoted as a global study destination providing premium education at affordable costs thereby helping to restore its role as a Vishwa Guru' reads 12.8 on page 39 of the NEP 2020. Notwithstanding the modal associated with place, premium and price, the preordained notion of an amorphous, unitary ideal of a

Vishwa Guru ignores the dynamic nature of beliefs, contexts and practices and the evolutionary and differentiated processes of teaching and learning and students and teachers. A science '…which insists on possessing the only correct method and the only acceptable results is ideology, and must be separated from the state' (Feyerabend 1978: 308).

The NEP 2020's repeated emphasis on the role of 'tradition' and 'Indian values' in shaping education curriculum and the need to integrate traditional 'knowledge systems', or ways of knowing and learning, with modern curricula matching 'world standards' is mentioned below. The except from the NEP 2020 (Introduction), reads as,

> The rich heritage of ancient and eternal Indian knowledge and thought has been a guiding light for this Policy. The pursuit of knowledge (gyaan), wisdom (pragyaa), and truth (satya) was always considered in Indian thought and philosophy as the loftiest human goal. The aim of education in ancient India was not just the acquisition of knowledge as preparation for life in this world, or life beyond schooling, but for complete realisation and liberation of the self.

The emphasis on traditions and values appears to lend an exclusive aura to something that ought to be seen for what it actually is. Ultimately, traditions are just that: they are neither good nor bad, but simply exist. An inclusive perspective, on the other hand, enables an openness to change, embrace of pluralism, and respect for the other's standpoint, thereby replacing the mythical privileges of closed communities of 'experts':

> … in a free society, intellectuals are just one tradition. They have no special rights … Problems are not solved by specialists (though their advice will not be disregarded) but by the people concerned in accordance with the ideas they value and by procedures they regard as appropriate. (Feyerabend 1982: 9–10, 87)

Every teacher engaging with intellectual activity is essentially an activist, an academic heretic and a terrorist as described by Ulitskaya (2011) and Belloc (1938) above. Yet, the call to intellectual activity and touching hearts and minds is a mindful activity. Removing the blinkers and inviting a panoramic perspective is precisely the purpose of education for transformation as it is being articulated by the likes of Selby (1997, 1998), Miller (1996,

1999), and O'Sullivan (1999). It is the reflexive teacher educator who can truly engage with the challenging demands of reflexivity.

The concluding part of this paper is devoted to a discussion on reflexivity and its significance in teacher education.

VI. Reflexivity in Teacher Education

Reflexivity remains hidden, often disguised or at best taken for granted in social theory. Therefore, what it is and what it does has merited little scientific enquiry necessary for producing clear concepts of reflexivity or a lucid understanding of reflexivity as a social process. The paucity of studies does scant justice to a rich and vibrant concept—a philosophy for and of education.

The reasons for promoting reflexivity to a central position within social theory and teacher education can be outlined in the following premise. The subjective powers of reflexivity mediate the role that objective structural or cultural powers play in influencing social action and are thus indispensable to explaining social outcomes (Archer 2017: 168). The following paragraphs invite teachers and teacher educators to reclaim and engage reflexively with their pedagogical experiences as central to the human conditions that they serve.

Much of the literature on reflective learning serves to highlight two key elements of reflection, namely: a) making sense of experience and b) reimagining future experience; the general concern is with how, and at what level, learners reflect (Bain et al. 2002; Hatton and Smith 1995; Mezirow 2006). Effective choices, however, require a reflexive and lifelong approach to learning whereby the individual engages in a continuous process of questioning and transforming their own capabilities and motivations in relation to, and as a response to the changing social conditions and expectations of the work or learning environment (Archer 2007). The notion of reflective practitioner was now enriched by a more comprehensive view of the notion of a reflexive pedagogue that viewed the need for reflexive processes, including reflection.

Gillie Bolton attempts to demystify the difference between reflection and reflexivity in her 2010 book *Reflective Practice, Writing and Professional Development.* Her distinction between reflection and reflexivity is as follows (2010: 13–15):

> Reflection is learning and developing through examining what we think happened on any occasion, and how we think others perceived the event and us, opening our practice to scrutiny by others ... it involves reliving and re-rendering: who said and did what, how, when, where and why. It might lead to insight not noticed at the time of the experience.
>
> Reflexivity is finding strategies to question our own attitudes, thought processes, values, assumptions, prejudices and habitual actions, to strive to understand our complex roles in relation to others ... it involves thinking from within experiences ... a questioning process that goes further than the practical reflection of what happened and how can I do better next time.

Unlike reflection, reflexivity compels us to engage in critical introspection in the moment, as well as after it, while simultaneously critiquing our socio-political contexts (Creswell 2006; Hara 2010; Langer 2016; Roebuck 2007; Zinn et al. 2016). Reflection is after, and individual reflexivity is ongoing and relational. Reflexive inquiry disrupts normalised assumptions about how we come to knowledge and presents essential questions about our capacities as researchers, to account for an ever-evolving understanding of our experiences (Cunliffe 2003).

Reflection, critical reflection, and transformative reflection are some of the terms often used interchangeably with reflexivity (Hatton and Smith 1995; Ryan and Bourke 2013). Reflection in this paper is viewed as a necessary component of reflexivity, the latter characterised by deliberative action following reflective thought. While some forms of reflective learning rely on metacognitive thinking strategies (Dahl 2004) alone, however, these fail to account for social contexts and structures which influence learning; whereas reflexivity is characterised by the reflective interplay between individuals and social structures to understand, maintain or change, courses of action chosen by individuals (Archer 2010). Reflexivity is the acknowledgment of an individual situated within a personal history within the real world.

A reflexive methodology informed by ontological and epistemological considerations requires teachers and teacher educators to address critical questions about the essence of reality, the construction of knowledge, and the ways we engage with each other and society (Armitage 2012; Cunliffe 2003). The dynamic and evolving interrelatedness between the individual and the society renews the concept of reflexivity in the literature. Recent additions adopt a view of reflexivity as a conversational, collective, and sociopolitically situated practice through which actors question traditional practices and explore new possibilities for joint action (Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith 2004; Cunliffe & Jun 2005).

Our dynamic experiences of life invite us as teachers and teacher educators, as human beings, to develop understandings of self-cultivation; relating to others and engaging in systems reflexivity however, serves as a significant framework for critique to reconnect our ways of seeing, being and becoming to what is often taken for granted and concealed by our experiences and theoretical understandings. Such a concealing leads human beings to experience the world at a very superficial level. A constant interrogation of our preferred ways of seeing, being and becoming is reflected in the choices we engage with. The table given below illustrates that in reviewing, reflection and reflexivity we are called to a reconnecting to our taken for granted ways of seeing, being and becoming.

Table 1: Reflexivity - Reconnecting ways of seeing, being and becoming

Ways of seeing	**Ways of being**	**Ways of becoming**
Review	Competence	Curiosity
Reflection	Character	Confidence
Reflexivity	Conscience	Choice

Despite the growth of several forms of reflexivity—participant reflexivity (Garfinkel 1967), researcher reflexivity (Gouldner 1970), textual reflexivity (Derrida 1978), postional

reflexivity (Macbeth 2001), radical reflexivity (Cunliffe 2003), aesthetic reflexivity (Ryan 2014), personal reflexivity (Brand 2015), and transformative reflexivity (Zinn et al. 2016)—pedagogic reflexivity or reflexive pedagogy is yet to merit a scientific inquiry. Human reflexivity has come to be viewed as one of the major concerns of the 20th century. It has been referred to as the most pressing problem of our time. And yet, as a distinct topic in teacher education few philosophers and researchers have either analysed or speculated systematically on so complex a phenomenon as reflexivity. A scientific inquiry into reflexivity and reflexive pedagogy could help uncover the multiple subjectivities, various contexts, and polyvocality of the teacher educator's enactment of theoretical beliefs about teaching, and situating them in their narratives about learning experiences as they relate to praxis development.

As the political terrain continues to change, teacher education—its management and how teacher educators and students organise, communicate, and participate in different ways than they used to—is getting more homogenised. A new strand of imaginative politics is blurring the boundaries between the school and the learner. Reflexivity in teacher pedagogy enables a collaborative exploration between and among a community of learners with how education is pushing the boundaries of the known repertoire of contention and dialogue, by not only demonstrating against the status quo but also demonstrating how the world can be different.

> It is in fact a part of the function of education to help us escape, not from our own time – for we are bound by that – but from the intellectual and emotional limitations of our time.
>
> – T.S. Eliot

Reflexive pedagogy positions teacher educators to collaboratively connect the dots from various teaching learning settings to interrogate how provoked moments of disruption or clarity can fuse various interventions and lead to mobilisation of transformative education for social justice. Reflexive teacher educators, instead of celebrating institutions that purport to privilege merit to portray new social actors as bearers of better societal alternatives, are open to explore how the said institutions facilitate the cultivation of alternatives to set off transformation.

VII. We Make Our World, and Our World Makes Us

The current era of education is inextricably enmeshed in promoting a corporate agenda that privileges the consumer and not citizens, who make up the 'bottom line'. The vitriolic and politically-prescribed discourse framing education and teacher education today is ineffective, or worse, harmful. A growing political will to discredit, dehumanise, and dismantle liberal and progressive education has led to weaponising the vulnerabilities of individuals into narratives of fear. Therefore, we fear other nations, we fear the others from within, and we fear change facilitated through ethically bankrupt technocratic management of education that may be used to disperse power to others. In an atmosphere bereft of epistemological, emotional and personal moorings, the corporate elites within a / the society work to exploit these factors and co-opt technologies to consolidate their privilege over teaching and learning. Teacher educators as academic heretics serving to enhance the humanity of education attempt to reframe teaching and learning as inherently vulnerable undertakings—fraught with de-professionalisation, alienation and loss of professional autonomy and identity.

Current educational policies, particularly in India, have swung so far in the direction of overtly politicised and decontextualised beliefs and practices so much so that clarity becomes impossible and personal freedom and autonomy remain elusive. It is not farfetched to imagine the loss of the imaginative and expressive capacities of a generation of children and adolescents. The reflexive pedagogical imagination deeply ingrained interior journeys—reflects ways of observing and embracing the world of others, of becoming wise, becoming self, and becoming skilled practitioners of meaning making. Educational narratives in teacher education offer myriad opportunities for the reflexive teacher educator as academic heretic to interrogate and engage with wholeness, sustenance, and renewal.

Reflexive Pedagogy can make a substantial contribution to the current debate about democracy, by emphasising the central importance of education to political thought and practice; it suggests that only an education system based on liberal democratic principles can offer the possibility of a genuinely free society. Educational contexts are the human

arena for interrogating and engaging with values in action, and to realise how they frame our cultural ecology and our life development. To demand that the systems that administer our lives, and the technology that powers them, be forced to become more responsive to the needs of individuals than to business and government, with true social liberation as our ultimate goal demands a reflexive imagination of an academic heretic.

W. C. Fields once remarked, ' Idon't know who discovered water, but it certainly wasn't the fish.' This image succinctly conveys the problem of submerged consciousness that a reflexive academic heretic must encounter. Like the fish in water, we, too—in relation to our culture—are in what Paolo Freire (1970) calls a sub-merged state of consciousness. With the incredible onslaught of information that our modern consciousness demands we attend to, we are, according to John Ralston Saul (1997), *an unconscious civilisation.* A reflexive civilisation, we argue, stands to draw from Foucault's (1988: 37), 'Since these things have been made, they can be unmade, as long as we know how it was that they were made.'

Reflexive Pedagogy serves to stir teacher educators to critique (thinking), participate (doing) and realise moral responsibility (relating to others) in exploring values, alterity, dialogue and culture as possible coordinates for a renewed culture of education in the 21st century. Informed by a reflexive sensibility, teacher education is uniquely placed to explore avenues for the resurgence of public and social trust, to swing the pendulum of educational practices back to a place of balance and wholeness.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's observation, 'He who cannot draw on three thousand years is living from hand to mouth' appears to match a more recent observation, namely that of the IIT Delhi Director, V. Ramgopal Rao, who in his tweet wrote that 'NEP 2020 proposes path breaking steps which will impact higher education in a significant way. Creation of NRF with involvement of all ministries will make our research impactful and visible to the society. ''Morrill moment'' for India.' Between the Morrill Act of 1862 to NEP 2020 it is easy to imagine the significant progress the world has made, yet, it is disconcertingly hard to miss the dangers of a policy with a dated and regressive mindset.

Reflexivity and reflexive pedagogy readily challenges, if not breaks through, the 'ontological' conceptualisation of education in which processes of education are localised in liminality. This paper invites teachers and teacher educators as heretics, terrorists and activists to reclaim and engage with reflexive pedagogical experiences as central to the human conditions that they serve. Without this engagement there can be no such thing as education.

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