Educators on the ‘edge’: flight, resistance and the politics of possibility amongst teachers in managed neoliberal regimes

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The narrative

- Reflecting on research as analysis, critique, and/towards ‘possibility’

- Connecting with the ‘politics of possibility – a new global political imaginary

- Confronting crisis in education – the problem (with the problem) of ‘how much longer can I go on?’

- Opening to alternative epistemologies of reality, necessity and possibility

- Using critical philosophy (ontology and epistemology) as analytical method

- Transcending ‘research’ and ‘practice’: co-creating conditions for the ‘possibility of hope’
The critical sociology of social scientific knowledge is an alternative to the main theory of scientific knowledge production now prevailing in Kyrgyzstan. It is also partly a critique of this dominant discourse. The Kyrgyzstani discourse on the institutionalisation of sociology is based on a positivist theory of knowledge which maintains that there is a clear and ascertainable distinction between ideologies (distorted or mystified knowledges and false consciousness) and true, realistic and objective knowledge (Gieryn 1983: 783; Lincoln and Guba 2003); in other words, an unambiguous separation between knowledge and power. Social science—indeed, all science—is seen to belong rather unproblematically to the latter category. It is thus presumed that a ‘good’ social scientist can and must be free from all interested thinking, bias, and subjectivity. In this context, by dispensing with all ideologies, we can

‘The world as it exists is not true. There exists a second concept of truth, which is not positivistic, which is not founded on a declaration of facticity, on "verification" through the "facts" but which is instead loaded with value…. And if that doesn't correspond to the facts—and for us Marxists, facts are only reified moments of a process—in that case, too bad for the facts (um so schlimmer fur die Tatsachen), as Hegel said in his late period. (Ernst Bloch in interview with Michael Lowy, 1976, pp. 37–38)
The ‘politics of possibility’

‘Is it possible to think of other ways of producing concrete wealth, forms not fully subjugated to the mandates of capital?

Is it possible to have other ways of organising and reproducing social life, which are more satisfactory than the modes of existence imposed by the modern capitalist world?

To what extent is the use value of life forced upon us by capitalist modernity, the only one imaginable?

Can we recover our capacity to self-determine the goals, rhythms and forms of our everyday life?

Where does this possibility lie? How is it produced and nurtured?’

Raquel Gutiérrez Aguillar, Lucia Linsalata & Mina Navarro Trujillo, ‘Producing the common and reproducing life: notes towards rethinking the political’, 2017, p. 80
The problem with (the problem of) ‘how much longer can I go on?’

Reframing ‘crisis’ through an alternative epistemology of possibility

- being aware of the ‘monocultures of capitalist modernity’ and the ‘ecologies of knowledge’ they ‘make non-existent’
- understanding of reality as (1) process, (2) multiple, (3) ‘spatialised’ with ‘fronts’
- distinguishing between ‘Nothing’, the ‘Not’ and the ‘Not-Yet’ in history and experience
- understanding that we can hope in different (more and less critical) ways

‘Keys of hope’ (Dinerstein)

- Negation (No!)
- Creation (This Instead)
- Contradiction/Disappointment
- Excess (What Remains?)

‘Layers of possibility’ (me)

- Formal (unicorns)
- Factually objective (probable)
- Fact-based, object-suited (potency/potentiality)
- Objectively real (praxis)
Tools for Blochian readings of data

‘Keys of hope’ (Dinerstein)
- Negation (No!)
- Creation (This Instead)
- Contradiction/Disappointment
- Excess (What Remains?)

‘Layers of possibility’ (me)
- Formal (unicorns)
- Factually objective (scientific)
- Fact-based, object-suited (potency/potentiality)
- Objectively real (praxis)
Beyond ‘research’ and ‘practice’ (co-creating conditions for the possibility of hope)

- critical educator subjectivities and collectivities
  - re-occupy the self
  - de/alt-professionalisation
  - learn to not be managed

- co-author meanings
  - unlearn internalised oppressions
  - unplug from patterns
  - heal from wounds
  - search invisible, worthless

- detach from institutions
  - recognise hermeneutic time
  - practice affective pedagogies

- ‘protecting and creating spaces where people live, learn, interact, express...outside institutions and professionals’
  (Fasheh 2006)
'monocultures' of modernity (Santos 2014)

*scientific epistemology*

*linear time*

*naturalised difference & hierarchy*

*logic of the dominant (universal) scale*

*logic of capitalist productivity*