Active Hope in the Cracks of Higher Education: Collective Goldening and Becoming-with Fractures

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Poem: Micro-Acts of Collective Goldening

Active Hope is not waiting ahead of us.

It moves through cracks, through us, between us.

Not in certainty. Not in outcomes.

In shared breaths. Unfinished thoughts. The courage to linger.

To stay. To listen.

The gold in the cracks is not repair.

It is collective becoming.

Through thinking. Dreaming. Holding. Resisting.

We become otherwise.

We slow down.

We listen deeply.

We linger.

A crack becomes a meeting place.

A meeting place for tending the conditions through which other worlds begin to emerge.

Reflections (Also provided in audio file, available at https://youtu.be/a1BMc4EtliE)

This image emerged from conversations about hope in times that often feel fractured by uncertainty, acceleration and the relentless demands of neoliberal education. Thinking with *Kintsugi*, the Japanese art of repair, we became interested in what might happen when we attend to cracks in higher education not as problems to be hidden, but as openings for active hope through which something different can emerge. For us, hope is not a destination or a passive feeling. It is action, something we do through micro acts of care, reciprocity and solidarity. It takes shape when we make time to think together, listen deeply, dream big and remain open to possibilities that cannot yet be known.

The image invites us to consider how fractures may become meeting places for active hope. Not because all wounds can be repaired, nor because damage should be celebrated, but because moments of uncertainty can create opportunities to connect and imagine otherwise. In the cracks of contemporary education, these gestures may appear minor. Yet they become acts of resistance to cultures of speed, competition and productivity.

Inspired by concepts of active hope, minor gestures and gift economies, we think of these encounters as forms of collective goldening: ongoing practices of attending, caring, thinking

and becoming together through which the unnoticed gifts of shared time, reciprocity and intellectual generosity become the golden threads of different ways of living education. The gold is not what repairs the fracture. It is what emerges in-between and through us, as the courage to remain open to the not-yet.

This contribution asks: *What if creating and protecting spaces to think, listen, re-imagine and become otherwise, together, is itself an act of active hope in higher education?*

References

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