

Teaching is Knowledge. Knowledge is power.

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Proposal Type: Paper

Text:

*I had a dream
That dream was crushed on a day
On a single day my dream was crushed
It was the dream of my life
I am living my second dream
Or maybe is it part of my first dream?
I am teaching
I feel like in the middle of an ancient Greek theatre
I am in my dream
I survived
I want to tell my story, other stories
To you
To other people
To make a difference
I survived
I still have a dream.*

There are many centres and many peripheries, many ways of being active within and outside the academic discourse. Many ways to fight for one own’s dreams.

The poem above, as the title to this abstract, is part of the auto/biographical life narratives of ten language teachers who work in the same Higher Education institution in UK where I also work and research. It has been co-created by myself and by one of the participants and it has been used as an evocative object (Bollas, 2009) within the auto/biographical methodological framework employed for this study.

This paper, starting from one story about language teaching as re-negotiation of identity, focuses on powerful auto/biographical narratives of activism and of fight for one’s own ideas. The presented narratives are stories of struggle, but also of resilience, hope and joy. They are stories of a passion for teaching and for sharing knowledge. They are situated stories of freedom and independence through education.

This paper also explores my position of conducting research *differently* by actively engaging the participants as co-researchers within the study and by reflecting on my own transformative journey of becoming both a language teacher and a researcher. It will also consider the impact academic writing has on the self and on others (Richardson & St.Pierre, 2005).

The findings of this study give evidence that language teachers' narratives, despite being considered marginal within the main academic discourse, can be regarded as powerful voices of negotiation and re-negotiation of one's own professional identity through migration, displacement and reterritorialization into new physical and symbolic territories (Braidotti, 2011). These auto/biographical stories indicate that language teaching is more than a profession; it is an emotional, social and political act by which personal and professional identities are re-positioned within new physical and symbolic domains. The multidimensionality of the self seems to find expression within the fluidity, the cacophony of voices and the non-linearity of these diasporic stories of migration, that allowed the participants, including myself, to be *other* and *same*. Language teaching seems also to become a sacred place where beauty can survive and where resistance to mainstream academic discourse can be performed.

n.of words: 440

Question: How can we be active and struggle for the good from a position of marginality?

Keywords: professional lives, marginality, beauty, nomadic identity, academic writing.

References

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