

A politics of Critique and Hope

A hopeful development between cruel
optimism and cynical pessimism



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Naïve hope: blind faith that things will get better

Hokey hope: rooted in individualistic, tired narratives that folks who just “pull themselves up by their bootstraps” can overcome any barriers and live out their dreams

Mythical hope: premised on the false narrative of equal opportunity, emptied of its historical and political contingencies

Hope deferred: While founded on progressive ideals, can get caught up in the process of critiquing inequitable systems and structures while stopping short of active engagement due to the belief that no approach can have actual transformative potential because of broader barriers

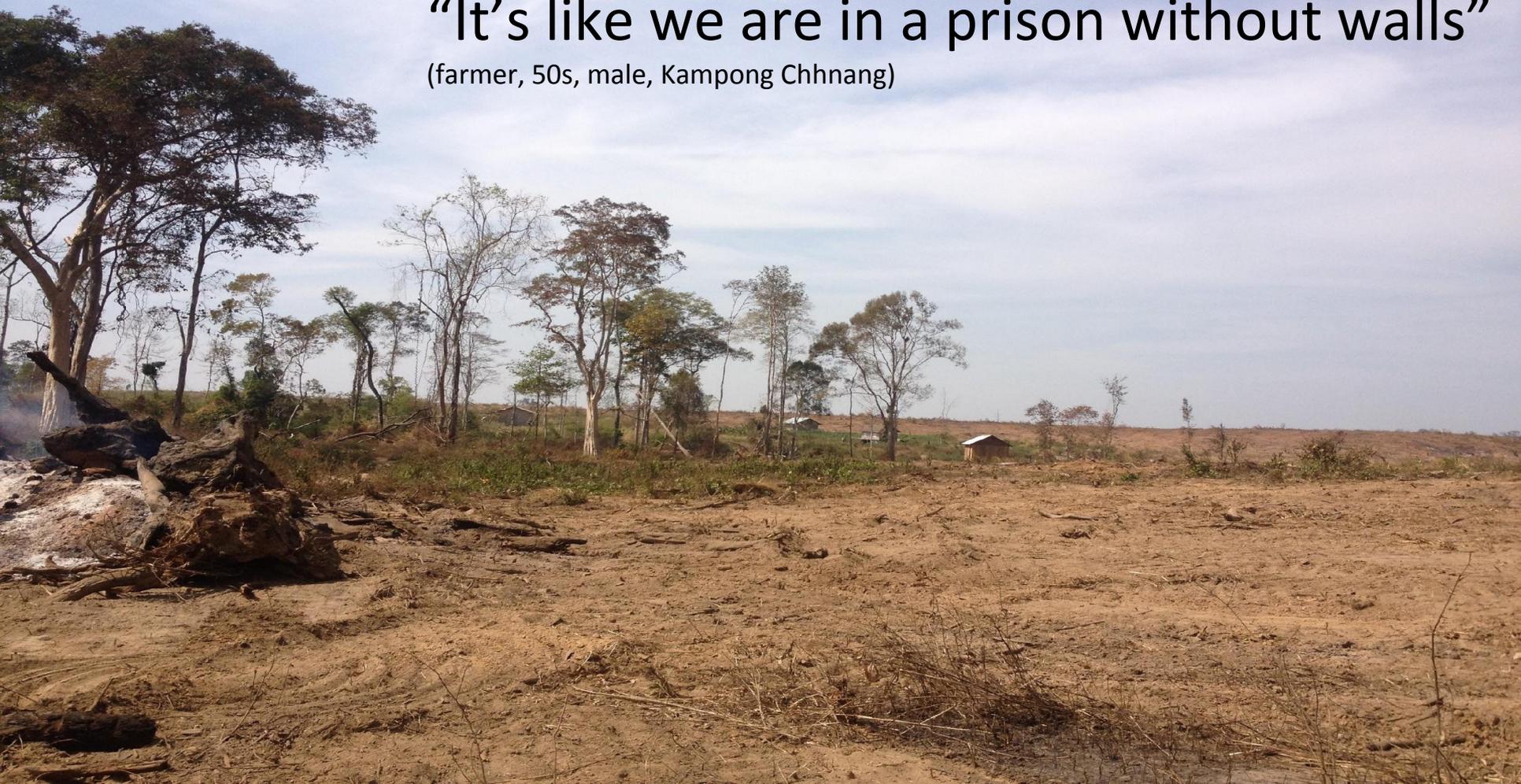
Critical hope : Engages with both the critical and the emotional: To say that someone is critically hopeful means that the person is involved in a critical analysis of power relations and how they constitute one's emotional ways of being in the world, while attempting to construct, imaginatively and materially, a different lifeworld.

(Zembylas 2014)

(And I would ask... Whose hope? How is hope generated and sustained, and how does my work enable/disable hopeful practices?)

“It’s like we are in a prison without walls”

(farmer, 50s, male, Kampong Chhnang)



Hope is not simply an expression of optimism, but rather a **positive change in the passage of affect...hope is a relational phenomenon...** hopes provisionally emerge from within the sets of relations and encounters that make up processes of hoping (Anderson, 2006, p.744; Anderson and Fenton, 2008, p.78).

Hope is without guarantees; it's ground is 'not-yet'.

Hope... incorporates the element of chance, without which there can be nothing new. (Bloch 1998)

Hope is not a destination; it is perhaps an improvisation with a future not yet realised. Hope then is an empirical question, and the sociology of hope requires an **attentiveness to the moments when ‘islands of hope’ are established and the social conditions that makes their emergence possible.** (Les Back, 2017)

Hope in a minor key is about the constant, attentive reworking of collective feeling through a **turning of attention to hope, anger, and claims to presence as they are already being staged in ways we don’t yet know how to perceive.** (Millner, 2017)



Thank you!

Please get in touch:

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