Learning to Live

Esther Fitzpatrick

The University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

As a white educator in New Zealand I am haunted by my past and in turn haunt others. This is one response to Derrida’s directive ‘Speak to the Ghost’.

Learning to live

A tattered script,

Unconsciously binding,

Haunts my becoming,

‘Locking up’

And ‘unlocking’.

Unconsciously I write on children’s minds¹,

Haunting their learning.

A Theory

I puzzle, ponder, mull.

Thrash against ignorance.

Derrida shouts, ‘Speak to the ghost!’


‘To learn to live … one must speak to the ghost’.

A traveller without a map,

I enter into the other world.

The ‘Touchstone stories’ of my childhood³,

The ‘Ancestors of my mind’⁴.

My ‘Embodied self⁵’ learning through,

Being-in-the world,

Remembering being-in – the world,

Being-in-the world with others⁶.
A Method

I search, seek, summon the ghosts,
Down dusty hallowed halls.

My finger follows the folds,
A letter, a will, a poem?
Crafted and kept,
Smudged by living hands.

I create a way,
A language of the Arts.

As Bricoleur\(^7\) I use the tools at hand.
I select and graft the pieces\(^8\),
I knit them together with paint and wire.

Sew words into a poem.

I perform the poem\(^9\)
In the presence of others.

I dig down deep,
Secret forgotten places, in muscle and flesh.

I draw out memories,
Fragmented and frayed.

Living to Learn

And for a while we,
Being in the world of story\(^10\),
Embody the living tapestry,
Transform Art into an ‘utterance’\(^11\).

Disrupting the bindings, opening children’s minds.
Unlocking, enabling others,
To learn to live.
References


6. Ibid p. 312


Bio

Esther Fitzpatrick is a lecturer in teacher education at The University of Auckland, New Zealand. She has published on issues of racial-ethnic identity in postcolonial communities, drama as a method of inquiry, and ethical issues of arts based methodologies. Her current research uses a postcritical ethnography, where as a bricoleur Esther draws on a range of arts based methods to explore ‘what it means to be a Pākehā educator’.