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Learning to Live

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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’².

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 self’⁵ 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™ I use the tools at hand.
   I select and graft the pieces,
   I knit them together with paint and wire.
   Sew words into a poem.
   I perform the poem
   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,™
Embody the living tapestry,
Transform Art into an ‘utterance’™.
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’.