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The Bricoleur researcher, serendipity and arts-based research

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The importance of serendipity in my research life has become more and more obvious as I immerse myself in creative research practice. Much of my endeavour has been haunted by Eliot Eisner's (2002) insistence that arts-based research should find a place of its own and not adhere to the scientific method. Hence, the more I become comfortable working as a Bricoleur researcher, using arts-based methods, the more I come to understand that there is no need to find a place, but rather return. I argue here that as arts-based researchers, the notion of serendipity and the role of a bricoleur are useful to make sense of embodied, sensory and, at times, messy research processes.

My aim is to reintroduce you to the tale of '*The Three Princes of Serendip*' (Merton and Barber 2004), which has become lost in our Western devotion to the scientific method. Although I respect the scientific method, it is not the only way to make sense of our world/s. The following is the story of how I came to know myself as a bricoleur researcher using arts-based methods. It is a methodological piece, with examples from an arts-based project woven into the telling. Briefly, my research project storied the creation of an innovative arts-based method to explore the complex issue of Pākehā identities in a postcolonial society (see Fitzpatrick 2016b). Pākehā is a term to describe New Zealand people (originally of European descent) who are not the indigenous Māori (indigenous New Zealanders) (Belich 2001; King 1999).

An important characteristic of many populations in postcolonial countries is that many of us are multi-ethnic. Our whakapapa (ancestors) represent a diverse range of beginning points. This is especially the case for many Pākehā who, both ontologically and biologically, represent several ethnic and cultural groups. For many generations, our *growing up* has been alongside and entangled with other. The term Pākehā was originally used to differentiate between Māori (normal) and Pākehā (other) (Jones and Jenkins 2011); however, our colonial histories have resulted in Pākehā becoming a default identity, with an assumption of national identity and normality, and haunted by the racial construct of whiteness.

Understanding who Pākehā are is problematic due to the historical lumping together of all 'white' settlers into an imagined homogenous group in much of the writing and policies pertaining to Pākehā. My work aimed to disrupt the notion of a homogenous Pākehā group, supporting Lenihan's argument that "[t]o achieve a greater understanding of factors contributing to the development and shaping of New Zealand society and culture it is essential to know more about the various immigrant strands" (Lenihan 2012, 91). In a recent chapter, titled 'Hauntology and Pākehā: Disrupting the notion of homogeneity' (Fitzpatrick in press, a), I argue that Pākehā represent an emerging people of mixed ancestry, with mixed ethnic and cultural origins, whose becoming is entangled with other/s. Fragments from a poem in this chapter 'A Pākehā haunting 1.' illuminate my sensory and embodied feeling of being and becoming Pākehā:

> *…*
> *And you would see my Pākehā bricolage:*
> *My Jewish bones,*
> *My Viking skin,*
> *My Sami cheek bones,*
> *My Danish eyes,*
> *My German hair,*
> *My Cornish courage,*
> *My Yorkshire creativity,*
> *And my Welsh love of singing.*
> (Fitzpatrick)

Perhaps I was always a bricoleur. We have a wall at home covered in art works. There is nothing particularly symmetrical or tidy about this wall. It is also a changeable feast. On our wall we have art we have bought for ourselves, won in competitions, been gifted, had painted lovingly for us, and there's even some random pieces we have painted ourselves. My husband Mike's 'Scooby Doo', in bright pink, hangs next to his mother's calm watercolour of Lake Rotoma. The many-coloured arpillera of a Chilean market, gifted to me by Peter O'Connor, next to my daughter's painting of Ōpōtiki-Mai-Tahiti, in memory of a weekend mother-daughter trip to the town of my birth. The artist, Dick Frizzell's 'Mum's pavlova recipe', my acrylic still life of 'A black pot with veges', Lyall Pennisula's abstract acrylic of the crucifixion, an embroidered elephant from India, and many other art works are joined by a collection of old vinyl record covers. It is an eclectic collection. And in many ways it represents who Mike and I are as a couple; a patchwork of stories. Following in the footsteps of the traditional bricoleur (craftspeople), we have created an art wall with what we had at hand.

Becoming a researcher

In developing a research identity for this project, I was conscious of my 'self' as a patchwork of stories. I was a bricolage, a compilation of many stories. A complex self. As with any role we play in life I assume a particular identity, and a research story requires someone to play the role of a 'researcher'. That was me. I was conscious this time-honoured role in Academia had a history, a set of traditions and assumptions. Therefore I approached the role with trepidation, wanting to respect heritage but not be locked into a role dominated by any particular paradigm. I planned to push at some of these assumptions and construct a research identity that best fitted the purpose of the task (Denzin 1994; Denzin and Lincoln 2000). Hence, as I 'put on the shoes' of a researcher I had no clear path or map that pointed to a designated ending. The role was only partially defined; it required improvisation, a responsiveness to embodied practices and space to evolve through the process. Responding to the argument that Pākehā need to know their histories I also recognised this sort of research required an innovative and creative methodology. I needed to *create a way* to explore the complex issue of becoming Pākehā; no one definition, theory or method would suffice. Hence, I adopted the bricolage approach and learnt to play the role of a bricoleur researcher.

The Bricoleur

'Bricoleur' originally comes from the French expression to describe crafts-people who work creatively with materials left over from various other projects and who use 'the tools at hand' to create something new (Denzin and Lincoln 2000; Harper 1987; Levi-Strauss 1974; Rogers 2012). Claude Levi-Strauss (1966, 1974) appropriated the term 'bricolage' in the early 1960s to explain the complex and eclectic process of meaning-making in his work as an anthropologist. Bricolage as a metaphor was

employed by Levi-Strauss to make sense of the underlying structures that determine human meaning-making and, simultaneously, used it to disrupt the structuralist binary which, he believed, polarised mythical with scientific rationality. Levi-Strauss, therefore, focused on how 'mythical knowers' worked through a flexible, fluid and open-ended process, piecing together fragments of their life-history, in cultural contexts, to make meaning (Rogers 2012, 3). Hence, the work of a bricoleur is understood as both an intellectual activity and a mythopoetical activity (Derrida 1978). Popularised by Tolkien in 1931 as a title of his poem 'Mythopoeia', mythopoetical is a Greek term for myth-making. Tolkien's poem referred to the creative human author as 'the little maker':

> Your world immutable wherein no part
> The little maker has with maker's art.
> I bow not yet before the Iron Crown,
> Nor cast my own small golden scepter down… (cited in Parish 2010)

Rejecting what he perceived to be 'modern man's' misplaced worship of rationalism (the Iron Crown), Tolkien believed that myth-making helped narrate and disclose truth (Manglaviti 2004). Through his myth-making Tolkien believed he could speak to people who were grappling with concepts of a natural world that had become de-personalised and a God who seemed distant, even irrelevant, to an enlightened modern sensibility (Manglaviti 2004, 161).

Important also in Levi-Strauss's take on bricolage was the use of myth-making and the imagination where

> … mythical meaning-making bricoleurs combine their imagination with whatever knowledge tools they have-at-hand in their repertoire (e.g. ritual, observation, social practices) and with whatever artefacts are available in their given context (i.e., discourses, institutions, and dominant knowledges) to meet diverse knowledge-production tasks. (Rogers 2012, 3)

The bricoleur researcher, then, is required to move between the worlds of the intellectual knower, the mythical knower and the imagination. As the bricoleur I was stitching together fragments of story generated from the historical archives, and this required using my imagination where there were (usually) gaps in the story. As a storyteller and researcher I used clues that were found through making creative connections to other data sources such as wider historical, social and political texts. I would then hold the fragments of data I had discovered "up against the background of the broader context" (Chang 2013, 116). I needed to creatively play with those clues that were available, those 'treasures' I had inherited from my culture and that exist in our social environments, responding psychologically and existentially to the experience (Weinstein and Weinstein 1991, 162). As Chang (2013) said, we "*imagine* a smell not buried in the data" (116, emphasis added).

Later, Denzin and Lincoln (1999), in the spirit of Levi-Strauss, reapplied the term 'bricolage' to explain the significant ways qualitative researchers were adopting eclectic approaches to their research endeavours. These approaches were manifested through multiple methods of inquiry and theoretical lenses, a diversity of perspectives, and through philosophical notions of the object of inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln 1999; Kincheloe 2001; Rogers 2012). Kincheloe believed there was "no better concept [that] captures the possibility of the future of qualitative research" (Kincheloe 2001, 670). So as a novice bricoleur I immersed myself in the research role with both body and mind, involved in an interplay of the theoretical and empirical, constructing meaning through creatively applying what became available throughout the process. In this process I first needed to attend to my personal feelings, thoughts and emotions, always keeping in mind the question and context of the research endeavour (Chang 2013; Finneran 2008). Secondly, I would begin by drawing on what I knew, "or what [was] at my finger tips", and then "blend, borrow, add to, adapt and transform my approach" (Harper 1987, 95) always gaining skills and further insight. Hence, through my role as a bricoleur, I

was constantly "defining and extending myself … by what [was] finally a mysterious mixture of improvisation, opportunity, and accident" (Harper 1987, 92). In other words, it was a serendipitous journey.

Serendipity

I believe there is a distinct synergy between the role of a bricoleur, arts-based research and a serendipitous approach to research. As the journey unfolded, the word 'serendipity' began to feature more and more in my conversations and writing as an important aspect of my journey. It required investigation. Horace Walpole coined the term 'serendipity' after his reading of the ancient tale of the *Three Princes of Serendip* in 1754. The Princes had made several 'chance' discoveries on their journey (Merton and Barber 2004). Although the term has become common usage, the original story and Walpole's understanding of serendipity are useful to better understand the role of the bricoleur researcher. Like the *Three Princes of Serendip* (Merton and Barber 2004), the bricoleur also sets out on a journey of discovery. They are skilled and knowledgeable, and prepared to make sense of their discoveries along the way. Weinstein and Weinstein's (1991) description of the bricoleur researcher resonates with the Three Princes. As an "astute wanderer" the bricoleur must "connect seemingly isolated fragments with other apparently unrelated fragments" (Weinstein and Weinstein 1991, 160). The Three Princes are described as having sagacity, wits, skills and intellectual training to make sense of these fragments (Merton and Barber 2004). Again, Weinstein and Weinstein describe the bricoleur who, with "sensitive reflection upon each of life's fragments, can arrive at an understanding of some aspect of society" (1991, 160). Similar again to the Three Princes, Kincheloe (2001, 2005) believed the bricoleur researcher needed a high level of skill and knowledge before embarking on the research journey. For example, skill in performing a range of research tasks, the ability to self-reflect, and a knowledge of diverse qualitative paradigms (Denzin 1994, 17).

And, as chance would have it, some distant Facebook friend posted an article on "How to cultivate the Art of Serendipity" (Kennedy 2016) just as I was about to write about critical family history. It was a serendipitous posting, and in the article I learnt about the role of a 'Serendipiter', which was coined by the New York photographer Gay Talese, as well as the term 'Super Encounterers', which Sanda Erdelez relates to those researchers who have special powers of perception that lead them to clues (cited in Kennedy 2016). Hence, the Serendipiter is a skilled researcher who always has a problem or question that occupies their mind, who immerses themselves 'playfully' and 'passionately' into their world, and who is open to notice and discover connections and patterns throughout their daily encounters. The article ended with an important question for the Serendipiter. 'One day we might be able to stumble upon new and better ways of getting lost'. So how do we as serendipitous researchers cultivate a practice of getting 'lost' in our research?

My aim as a bricoleur researcher was to create an embodied approach to my exploration, an interplay between the mind and the body; applying thinking to my embodied *senses* in the process of creating the bricolage. This meant allowing space for getting lost, learning to use my intuition by *feeling* my way through, taking my time, waiting and mulling over, playing with my material, and tossing back and forth between theory, words and knowledge. I was enchanted by the idea of being a bricoleur, but more than a little wary. There is a certain vulnerability and riskiness involved in being a bricoleur as you never know exactly what is around the corner.

Pinar (2001) argued that qualitative researchers must involve themselves in important, but risky, hybrid interdisciplinary constructions, where fragments of philosophy, history, literacy theory and the arts, among others, collide (698–699). The bricoleur, like the Three Princes of Serendip, needs to be responsive to the stories generated by allowing for the dynamics of the context, have an aptness for creativity, know how to artistically combine theories, techniques and methods, and also be able to

create their own methodological tools when needed (Rogers 2012, 6). How then, you might ask, does adopting the role of the bricoleur best fit with my task? What is 'the thing' I am trying to get a sense of? As asserted by Finneran (2008), the bricolage approach emerges and is directed by the research question and the context (Finneran 2008, 41).

Complex constructs, such as identity, require a research approach that can explore the multifaceted, fluid and emerging aspects of the lived world. Pākehā constitute a complex and elusive identity. Therefore by adopting the role of a bricoleur I could respect the complexity inherent in the processes and the contradictions of the lived world of becoming Pākehā. Bricolage afforded me the privilege of openness and responsiveness in the research process—it is an emergent design (Denzin 1994; Rogers 2012). It is not a linear, 'by-the-book' method, rather, it requires the researcher to *create method* through a "marriage of the hand and the mind" (Harper 1987, 118). As a post critical ethnographer I worked inside the research moments, generating stories, analysing and making meaning through a constant, cyclic to-ing and fro-ing. Immersing myself in critical arts-based methods I responded to the stories generated with the 'tools at hand' (Levi-Strauss 1974). The role of a bricoleur fitted my purpose. There was permission given here for me to experiment, to struggle, critique and develop my own methodology.

Critical bricolage

The role of a bricoleur researcher demands a new level of research consciousness. Throughout the research process it was important for me to personally interact with the subject/object of inquiry to generate data and negotiate methodological strategies, as they were required, in the unfolding context of the research situation (Kincheloe 2005, 324). Therefore a high level of cognitive thinking was required as I "tinkered" with the tools at hand to create appropriate research methods (Kincheloe 2005, 324). The process was messy. I cycled between deciding where the research was going, choosing the appropriate methods, thinking about what was being studied, and making sense of the data generated (Becker 1998, 9). Referring to these strategies as 'tricks', Becker (1998) describes how the bricoleur researcher acknowledges complexity, not wishing to reduce the process to a formulaic response. Rather, the strategies are likened to a "manic tinkerer adrift with his wits" (Geertz 1995, as cited in Becker 1998, 9). The tinkerer uses their imagination and mythical thought as a critical strategy where "mythical thought is [considered] a kind of intellectual bricolage which allows mythical reflection to reach brilliant unforeseen results on the intellectual plane" (Finneran 2008, 112; Levi-Strauss 1966). I also needed to critically reflect on my own position in the research endeavour, taking into consideration *my* histories, how *they* are located, and how this shaped my interpretation (Kincheloe 2005; Rogers 2012). Excited by the potential bricolage offered qualitative research, Kincheloe (2001, 2005) expanded Denzin and Lincoln's idea of the bricoleur researcher with the aim to develop a rigorous critical approach. Kincheloe (2001, 2005), and later Rogers (2012), then explored the different dimensions of research bricolage as originally defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2000): methodological bricolage, theoretical bricolage, political bricolage and narrative bricolage. Many of these dimensions were reflected throughout my project.

Again, as the researcher, I needed to be critically conscious of my own positioning in the research process. This resonated directly with my stance as a postcritical ethnographer. Madison argues that postcritical ethnography is a move to contextualise the position of the researcher and that "positionality is vital because it forces us to acknowledge our own power, privilege, and biases just as we are denouncing the power structures that surround our subjects" (2012, 8). I am a Pākehā educator and, therefore, I was exploring a context and identity in which I am personally entangled. As such there is no claim to neutrality or objectivity in this research, rather there is a recognition that my position will shape the process and final bricolage; as well as my own becoming (Finneran 2008).

Methodological bricoleur

As a *methodological bricoleur,* I became engaged in meaning-making tasks throughout the process that were fluid and creative. I worked with a range of critical research methods, ethnographic strategies, Pinarian *currere* (an autobiographical reflection on one's own educational experiences, 1975) (Pinar 2012) and embodied arts practices. Kincheloe and Berry (2004) describe a 'gateway' to approach the research context which they call 'Point of Entry Text' (PoET). The PoET is described as anything that can provide or generate meaning. Throughout my study these PoETs were diverse and ranged, for example, from photographs, census records, family stories, historical archival data, to the online ancestry.com database. Each of these PoETs was poststructural in nature as they were subject to a range of different lenses for analysis (Finneran 2008). The PoET is further described as the "bottom text" in the process where, overlaid onto the original PoET, are several transparent layers (Finneran 2008, 114–115), such as the methods (described above) and theories (that I will describe below). I also employed a range of critical arts-based methods throughout the process to both generate and interpret data. These included wire sculptures, painting, a range of poems, script writing, factionalisation, performance, ekphrasis, and the making of an Arpillera (a Chilean tapestry).

I remember the moment when I was busy on my deck making a wire sculpture of a Pākehā (see Figure 1. An Empty Space). As I was twisting, pulling and working with the wire, all the stories of my ancestors that I had been reading in the historical archives came back to me. I put down my wire working tools and gathered my pen and paper.

Figure 1.   An Empty Space. Wire Pākehā Woven so Stories of Becoming Pākehā Can Fill up the Gaps

Wire

> I am drawing out the wire
> It is neatly bound like my Grandma's yarn of wool
> I am imagining how I will weave my wire Pākehā
> I draw out the wire carefully
> Knitting, weaving, tukutuku koru
> I draw more wire and remember
> An ancestor who drew wire
> In Thurgoland
> An ancestor who used wire
> In Sheffield
> An ancestor who manipulated wire
> In Auckland
>
> To make my Poppa's crib
> And then I think of number eight fencing wire
> And remember
> An ancestor who won a bet
> Building fences
> In Christchurch New Zealand
> My mother's chicken wire
> Chinese bantams, Rhode island red
> And then I remember running a race
> Across the paddocks
> Dodging the cow pats
> Smeared with paspalum
> ZAP
> My first electric fence.

These choices were not made in advance, rather they were a response to the dynamics and context of the data. Throughout the generation and analysis of data, I combined relevant theories, techniques and methods to make meaning (Rogers 2012, 6). I created my own methodological tools when needed.

Political bricoleur

As a *political bricoleur* I needed to be attendant to the different ways power was being played out in the research process and through the data generated. McLaren (2001) cautions the emerging bricoleur to interrogate and keep the "material world in view", that they need to consider "the economic structures of society … and [keep] the materiality of human existence squarely in sight" (McLaren 2001, 701). This was particularly significant in my work as I was exploring the 'becoming' of a Pākehā identity. The term Pākehā is fraught with political implications, especially so when we are considering the role of a Pākehā educator. It is important then to understand in what ways political power has shaped Pākehā and continues to do so. And further, how Pākehā as a particular dominant identity, shapes others.

Narrative bricoleur

Storying was also a significant part of this work. Therefore as a *narrative bricoleur* I needed to attend to the stories I generated; how knowledge was shaped by stories and how I told them. Importantly in this process, I attempted to counter the dominant stories of Pākehā and to offer alternative readings, and to also share those small stories and secret stories that have often been trivialised and/or silenced. It is in essence an attempt to disrupt the power of the dominant story. Counter stories are most apparent in my work as a critical family historian (Sleeter 2015), exploring the life story of one ancestral family alongside the story of the indigenous peoples whose land had been confiscated in the rural town of Opotiki (Fitzpatrick in press, b) and the untold story of the Jewish traders in the early settlement of Auckland (Fitzpatrick and Bell 2016a).

Avril Bell and I were engaged in a duo ethnographic project exploring our stories of becoming Pākehā. To our surprise, we discovered our families, mine Jewish traders, hers Colonial soldiers, were there at the birth of Auckland as a colonial city. It was also strange to find ourselves back in that same place where, now the University of Auckland City campus, our families first lived. To juxtapose these stories I employed the creative practice of making an Arpillera (see Figure 2, Arpillera of Early Auckland and the Story of a Goat). Again, a chance encounter with Roberta Bacic (2010) at a Visual Methods conference had introduced me to this method.

> The arpillera provided a way to juxtapose the stories Avril Bell and I had shared of our early ancestors: British soldier and Jewish trader. Creating the arpillera was a way to show our shared beginning in Auckland, our being haunted by the same landscape, yet from different perspectives. (Fitzpatrick and Bell 2016a, 10)

Figure 2.   Arpillera of Early Auckland and the Story of a Goat

Beginnings

When I reflect back on the beginning of this project, although even the beginning is hard to locate, I trace it back to those encounters with important 'others'. Perhaps it was Professor Peter O'Connor's phone call all those years ago, asking me if I wanted to do my PhD. To have someone believe that you are worthy is a terrific beginning.

And then there was Katie Fitzpatrick's seminar on poetry as method. A newly appointed colleague, I was encouraged by her work on diversity and poetic methods. Peter and Katie subsequently became my PhD supervisors. Struggling to find a theoretical framework that resonated with my topic, by chance colleague and friend Sandy Farquhar gave me a chapter to read (for an entirely different reason), and it was there I first came across the term 'haunting' (O'Loughlin 2009) which led me to Derrida's (1994) work on hauntology. And of course, when deliberating how arts-based research was done…

> **Esther** *excitedly*: … what does this type of research look like, feel like, sound like. How does it work? At the start I had no idea until serendipitously I experienced it for myself at the Critical Unit in Applied Theatre Symposium in 2010.
>
> *Suddenly in front of us George Belliveau appears, standing on a stage. The room darkens with just the one spotlight on George. He performs a Shakespearean drama but it is not a Shakespearean drama, it is the words/worlds of a teacher and her children he has been researching. We embody the moment, we are moved, we are engaged, he takes us into the classroom, and he changes us. The lights come back on. And we pause. And we clap.* (Fitzpatrick 2016b)

Or perhaps it was all those years ago, my mother dying of cancer, handed me her brown tattered box.

> **A box of memories**
>
> I was given a box. It was just an ordinary brown tattered file box, left to me when my mother died. She was only 48 years old. Inside the box lives the story of a 'ghost-child' (Harris, 2014), a child with no birth certificate that lacked both mother and father, a child whose family rejected her. Inside the box was everything my mother, and her mother, knew about this child. Her name was Ada, born in 1873 in Thames, New Zealand; she was my great-grandmother. I grew up with the story of Ada. I grew up wondering who her mother was. And when my mother died I was given the task of finding Ada's mother. All the clues were in the ordinary brown tattered box. (Fitzpatrick 2016b)

Becoming a researcher partly involves understanding the role of a researcher, and consistent with *The Three Princes of Serendip*, learning the skills, honing the craft and learning how to notice. Becoming a researcher is also a continual process, learning and creating methodology, and methods, that resonate with the issues being explored and the data generated.

Becoming a bricoleur

As a bricoleur researcher, our senses need to be alert to the stories that happen upon us, a serendipitous Facebook post, stories lying in wait in an old newspaper article, or the someones who are sometimes sitting with us in the room. Such as the time serendipity played its cards one night. I could almost hear Horace Waldpole laughing somewhere. When you enter into a relationship with someone you never truly know where it will lead. Because my supervisor Katie and I both believed in the importance of establishing trusting, respectful relationships (see Fitzpatrick and Fitzpatrick 2014)

we also developed a friendship and began to write poetry to each other as a form of creative improvisation. There were still a few family stories I had not researched or told. My relationship with Katie eventually led me to uncover one of these, and to find that Katie and I were distant cousins. The following two poems capture this serendipitous relationship. The first was sent to Katie after a Christmas party with my friends and colleagues from the faculty. The second poem was sent after a New Year's BBQ where Katie shared a book published by her aunty on the history of her family.

Christmas party December 2013

'They were called Poninghaus'.
'I'm a Poninghaus!'
Slightly tipsy,
Happy laughter.
Two brothers flee Germany.
Sugar bakers,
Johann Friederick and Carl Heinrich.
Catch a ship to the 'promised land',
Christchurch, New Zealand 1865.
Our Great Great Grandparents,
Brothers Poninghaus,
Built fences and dug ditches,
Had families made friends.
We *are* related.

6 January 2015

Dear Katie

Finding You
It's spooky stuff
I see my boys in the photo
In your family album
Of my Great Great Grandfather
I read in your history/mystory
A German story of immigration
Filled with hope
Turning swamp-land into garden
I see the tide turn
Destruction of a chapel
Changing of names
Imprisoned for being different
And I remember my Grandfather
A dark wet Wellington night
Devoid of hope
Looking to die
Finding a light
Finding a song
Finding someone to love
Finding family
Esther

I reflect back to my role as an educator and a researcher, and the importance of developing these respectful relationships with our colleagues, students and others. How willing are we to listen and

learn from these conversations? These relationships take time and energy—they are an investment and a gift.

What did I learn?

What did I learn as a Bricoleur researcher? I learnt the art of serendipity. As a researcher I have learnt how to notice. And in that, noticing not to make assumptions but, rather, to ask important questions and to make connections between seemingly random thoughts and observations. The tale of the '*Three Princes of Serendip'* provided a useful metaphor to make sense of the role of a bricoleur researcher. As the researcher I entered into the journey equipped with a range of skills and a willingness to learn new skills in response to the data generated. I was also open to chance discoveries. As a Serendipiter the journey became an intrinsic part of my daily life where, always humming in the background, important questions and issues pertaining to the role of a Pākehā educator had already been articulated. Throughout the journey, acts of noticing and noting were essential. And cognizant with Holloway and Kneale (2008), when summoning up the ghost I needed to be alert and to notice and become immersed in 'sites' where I might be enchanted, surprised, charmed and disturbed.

Concurrently, I was involved in a process of analysis, where I made connections between the personal and wider historical and theoretical stories, making some sense of the questions and issues through my note-taking and art-making. Early in 2015 I wrote in one notebook: "poetry now just seems to leak into all my work—my writing, my analysis, my emails, my talk". And the process was cyclic. As the bricoleur, I would shift between the data generating, analysis, art-making and storying. In 2016, on the pursuit of serendipity, Kennedy (2016) asked, "How can we get lost?" Arts-based research methods required me to embody myself in the practice of art-making, being in a mess and feeling lost were part of this process. It was through the acts of 'playing' and immersing my whole self in the moment/s (and with a note to Eisner) with all my senses that chance encounters and surprising revelations occurred.

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