

LINDA – Fieldnotes – Tuesday, July 10, 2007

Subject: Second meeting with Tom Goodridge, on his writing

Location: My office, Teachers College

Time: 5:00-7:00

I read three of Tom's pieces of writing. He arrived just before 5:00. We engaged in some chitchat then got to talking about his pieces. This meeting was primarily useful in terms of the project for developing our relationship. Basically, Tom left the meeting feeling that I had helped him greatly with his writing and I felt that he is now enthusiastic about helping me.

Tom works for some sort of program that does "early intervention." I did not get specifics, but he told a story about going to the house of a two-year-old and playing in the sprinkler. When he arrived in my office, he said, "It's hard to complain about the air conditioning today." Today the temperature was in the nineties and humid. He then told the story about turning on the sprinklers for the 2yo, who was scared to play in the water. She told him to go in, and he did. Apparently there were bystanders amused at "this white man" playing in the water. Flicking his hand, he told me that she did consent to be sprayed with water from him.

I began by asking him to mark the spots on the consent form that say I consent to be audiotaped. Then I talked about what I liked about my favorite piece, "Mint and the Rocking Car," having a strong argument and going in-depth into a particular story. He got quite excited and the conversation took off from there. In the course of talking about each of the pieces and about dissertation writing in general, we also talked about his pedagogical approach ("passive"), his ideas about schooling vs. learning (my terms not his), and about how children know that their reality is not invited into the school.

In describing his pedagogy, he said, "I'd love to be a fly on the wall," watching the children pursue their interests.

I told him that an underlying theme in his pieces was the contrast to school. Throughout the conversation I provided a lot of made-up examples, categories of analysis, and so forth to see if I could bring out what he thought. Indeed we brought out a lot of his ideas, and one of his contrasts between the garden and the school is that in the garden you have "permission to become what you are."

We did some push-pull, which I think was good for us, when he would start wandering off on a tangent. A lot of this was me asking why something was important. At one point perhaps my attention started wandering when he was talking about the young boys' interactions in the focus group (garden as family). He touched my hand to talk about how powerful it was that a boy shared his story of dislocation, especially from Africa, "a rooted culture," with grandmothers and aunts and so on. I'm not sure if he picked up on my words, but he emphasized, "to share your trauma." I steered him back to the problem

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of getting the reader to understand why it's so important (basically that he knows all the context, needs to communicate it to the reader in writing).

He kept repeating the word "ecology," and when I asked him to explain it he said "the spaces between people," "the relationships." He talked about in order to understand the rabbit you have to understand the fox and the carrot. Later when I was explaining how he can develop categories of analysis and units of analysis, I returned to this concept of "ecology." He really liked Ray's formulation of "boxes that leak," and repeated that he thinks anthropology fits best with his worldview.

We talked about what next for my project: meeting the 10 gardeners that his students met, and having him talk about them (to continue the interview and to prep me). We set our next meeting at 4pm on the 18<sup>th</sup>. He has school until 3pm. (What school?)