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LINDA – Fieldnotes – Friday, November 9, 2007

Subject: meeting Geoff Canada at Community Arts Conference

Location: Millbank Chapel

Time: approx 3:00-3:40

When I arrive Maxine Greene was speaking. [I don't remember much of what she said but of course she was warm and funny and wonderful.] She made gentle fun of the title of the conference, "Conversations across cultures: community arts education, exploring possibilities," and said something to the effect that cultures don't speak, individuals do. She managed to register criticism while warmly praising the purpose of the conference.

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Geoffrey Canada was sitting in the front row on the left side of the middle section, looking impatient and fussy. Shirley Brice Heath was in the second row on the right side, so I could not see her face.

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After Maxine finished Heath and Canada joined her on the floor to take a few questions. I asked a man if I could see his program, and I saw that I missed most of the good stuff already—Ed Gordon had spoken early in the morning, and a few young people from TRUCE presented their work.

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A man [couldn't see who] introducing himself as being from Hip Hop University gave a speech referencing Geoff Canada's earlier comment (which I missed) about the lack of African American males [where I'm not sure]. He contrasted 125<sup>th</sup> street where you see "brothers, sisters, and cousins" vs. here, which I assume means Teachers College, where things are "getting worse, not better." The audience applauded when he finished.

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Geoff Canada spoke about the need to raise the "sense of urgency" and that in "saving the marginalized," you "save America." He closed his little speech with, "in saving that particular group I think we'll also end up saving America." This too was met with enthusiastic applause.

Then there was a question about nonprofits and funding. Shirley Brice Heath spoke passionately about it, saying that nonprofit support of the arts "cannot be counted upon for the long haul." She argued for nonprofit people to learn "fiduciary responsibility," to figure out political machinations [can't remember her phrase], and to learn how to negotiate transport systems [??]. She said that she is not popular when she mentions this.

Maxine Greene then spoke of yesterday's article on foster care youth and how it painted them in negative ways [can't remember exactly what she said]. Here is a possible article [not sure if she was speaking of NY Times]:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/07/nyregion/07foster.html>

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Canada then spoke of the need for people with passion to learn the business end. He said "I never wanted to run a business. I wanted to work with kids." If you're good at working with kids, he said, you still need to run the business. He said "the crisis comes when" you are successful with your passion, but you "find out you are running a business."

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Heath mentioned that Lee Schor [?] wrote about all these nonprofits doing great work, and 10 years later they are all gone, so doing good work doesn't guarantee survival.

Canada talked about learning the business of learning about business. He said that a lot of people in the corporate sector are discovering the nonprofit world. There are lots of MBA programs for to learn to manage nonprofits. But the creative people are not learning the business end. He said the person running the business "can't be the person who is the dramatic inspiration."

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The moderator allowed people a break to "stretch your legs." A young black man (maybe in his 20s but dressed in hip-hop gear of dark blue baggy sweatshirt, brightly decorated long t shirt, and baggy jeans with a low-hanging crotch) came to speak with the middle-aged black man sitting in front of me (beige suit). The young man said something alluding to the wisdom of Canada's words.

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[Lots of talk about HCZ as a business. Alex, who used to work for TRUCE, also talked HCZ as a business and Geoff Canada as a businessman, echoing the press I've seen about HCZ.]

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### Meeting Geoff Canada

I joined the rush of people trying to make it to the floor to speak with one of the three speakers. I waited with a young black woman for a middle-aged woman to finish with Canada. An older man black looked as if he was going to take Canada away, whispering in his ear. The young woman pushed her way in to introduce herself as someone who used to be with City Years [?]. He asked her where she is now and she reported that she is now the assistant director there [didn't catch the name].

An older white woman with graying hair dressed in baggy clothing then interrupted and thanked him. The young woman looked crushed, and eventually moved away. I then jumped in and introduced myself, saying, "I work with Dr. Gordon." He replied, "Then you're like family." I thanked him for coming and told him I was working with the Supplemental Education group and also on a project in education in Harlem, and that I'd taken a look at Baby College and wanted to go see TRUCE. He said, "You know us then."

A young man took my picture with Canada. I asked him for his card and if he could email the picture to me. His card shows that he is from HCZ and TRUCE, on "Harlem Overheard."

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I then said hello to Shirley Brice Heath, who thanked me for coming. [I think I should have reintroduced myself—I'm sure she didn't remember my name, but I'm not sure she associated me with the study group.]

[I left without seeing what happened with Canada, if he left immediately or not. The consequences of having Joey up in my office—I should have snuck him into the conference with me. I probably won't return tomorrow, none of the headliners will be there except Laura Vural, who I'd like to meet.]