

First week :Wednesday

Dear Everyone,

Some thoughts about yesterday, as I experienced it. (there is no suggestion that you experienced the day in anything like the same way).

I was wowed by the clarity and beauty of some of the house metaphor texts. The density of some of the writing really did demand a second reading and here the writer-reader relationship was patent. Each writer knew they had interested addressees. They were not writing to the sky but to fellow writers who had been engaged in a parallel task.

I personally enjoyed the artificial discipline involved in trying to work mainly auditorily, mainly kinaesthetically and mainly visually, be it orally or on the page. The challenge here was to move out of my comfort zones and to try and be convincing in the visual channel.

I was warmly satisfied with the diversity of perception that the Fear story provoked in different people in our group. I think of this ability to create an inner elaborated text as what Ron Carter calls "everyday creativity" and I suppose the stimulation of "everyday creativity" is what this course is largely about. (I will lend you Carter's book).

I was shocked when I asked you " What is a comprehension question?" right at the end of the afternoon session and some people responded in ways that seemed to me to negate the experience we had just been through. How can I usefully ask P ████ "How many gates are there?" when his mind is on the horror of the giant shrinking into nearly nothing? How can I relevantly ask D ████ "when was it that the townspeople remembered they had a king?" when in her elaborated text she has become the king and experienced his great bravery as her own?

The story-teller should know his class and should pitch the language at an appropriate level of difficulty, so that it is possible for each listener to produce their elaborated internal text without being left in a fog of linguistic incomprehension.

My feeling is that **respectful** post listening questions will deal with the new internal texts and not with the original, supplanted text. That old text is dead and gone.

I suppose I was shocked by some of us reacting as a sort of trade guild defending our professional practice.... and comprehension questions are part of the language teacher's normal and unquestioned armoury.

By the way, being shocked is extremely good for me as it makes me think and re-assess.

As you will have noticed. today's letter serves the purpose of partially reviewing some of what we did yesterday and also allows me to share with you some of what I felt as the day progressed.

Tonight : 7.00 pm supper at the Thomas Beckett pub on the corner of Orange Street, just a stone's throw from the gates of the Cathedral, with its whiff of death and blood.

The Children's Crusade was preached there.

Warmly yours, Mario

