

1st Wednesday

Dear Everybody,

I wonder what the headmistress last night had as her main themes, as you perceived them? What did she want to tell you and what did you sense were the underlying themes for her? Were there things that you felt she glossed over or questions she circumvented, as Fr P ■ dodged the main personal bit of M ■ question/statement?

Maybe you wonder what I might mean by the rather vague word "themes"? Well, let me share with you some of the themes that I found myself thinking about yesterday as I accompanied you round Faversham:

- the theme of the small/ family business pitted agst the vast power of corporate capitalism.
This was evident in the brewery when our guide talked with pride about her company being the last sizeable family brewery in the UK. It was evident again when M ■ talked with considerable verve about the way the supermarket, Tesco's, stocking cut price books was a threat to her trade.
- The theme of ownership and regulation that come up in the pub when Silvana and Miriam gently clashed over the need to hold a fishing licence in Brasil or not. I know that S ■ feels that anybody daring to claim ownership of a river is obscene. (Here she was thinking as an evolutionist : " our way is much more natural than this shit here ")
When we visit schools you will find the theme of regulation/ regimentation again.
- The theme of assimilation into a culture. L ■ told us he feels fully assimilated.
I think he is, much more than my father was after a similar length of time, but I still sense him to be a conservative central European playing a magnificent 24 role-play of being British.
He seems to be very much an evolutionist lauding and praising the culture he has come into.
He is not English in his strong sense of being an intellectual- the British shy away from any claim of this sort- we rarely say of some one " Oh, X is an intellectual "
- The theme of compromise, softening and fudging. For me this came out in P ■'s description of the Church of England, the Anglican church, as being a mixture of many assorted beliefs, rather than a unified whole, a coalition rather than a party.
I think this softening is also an intrinsic part of UK English- A ■ brought this out when

we were in the Bookworm: she told me she reckons she speaks too abruptly for her host family. She answers too straight, shoots too much from the hip. A■, maybe you should read Joanna Channel's book ,Vague Language, which is all about how the Brits wrap their meanings in softening mist and haze.

I wonder what yesterday's themes were for you? They will be different from mine because a) I am not you and b) because I have not been raised in the beliefs current in your different areas of Sao Paulo society.

When you finish reading this letter we could get together in small groups to do some theme-hunting around yesterday's experiences.

Mario 

(odd to think that for the next two days I will be coping with Voralberg culture... will it be very different from that of other parts of Austria.....going from Poc,os de Caldas to Bahia was huge change of culture- I really had to adapt my way of working and fast.....I felt filled with an almost African somatic energy after a day with those folk.)

ps: how are you doing with projections (did you have many on the people we met in Faversham?)

I hope there will be letters from you on Monday --- writing to you is better as dialogue than as monologue