

Dear Back-from-the Archbishop's School People,

Visiting a school in another country can be a quite strong experience in terms all sorts of personal things- it can also be a powerful cultural experience. This could be particularly the case for Gianfranco who sees every thing with open, first time eyes. I guess that G [redacted] may be doing lots of comparing between half a generation ago and now.

Studying a foreign culture is like shooting pigeons from a moving vehicle. One's home culture is a flow in continual movement and the same is true of the foreign culture. Neither are fixed or static. The home culture gives one the terms of reference for looking at the target culture and at the same time offers a distorting mirror of the other culture.

I am often amazed at how well people can understand a foreign culture, despite the huge difficulties of this enterprise. Much of this endeavour has to be sub-conscious, as there is too much for the conscious mind to apprehend.

I wonder what your thoughts are of the whole business of deal with "foreignness". How do you go about it?

Mario



Ps: I am conscious of having used some expressions I have not yet heard in your English- this is on purpose: my letter is a good place to do some old-fashioned presentational teaching.