

Dear Twelve,

This is the last day of the main course- Tomorrow the nine will meet in the corner-room down this corridor as you go to Study Space.

Yesterday we explored an interesting cultural area , that of privacy, confidentiality and secrecy.

Sure, by asking you to open my mail, I broke a number of unwritten rules. In doing so I laid money matters on the table and in so doing I stepped across a fierce Northern European line. In UK people are VERY careful to hide their salaries from each other.

The reactions I noticed in the group were interesting- I got the feeling that E was happy to tell me about B's letter, that she took pleasure in acting as B's intermediary, that she enjoyed her middle position between him and me - afterall I had asked her to take this position.

I felt that E really wanted to know the exact nature of the stock exchange sale she was reading about- she did intensive reading that it is rare to see in a class and M helped her as much as she could.

So the breaking of the secrecy rules did not seem to bother these Northern Med folk too much at all.

But with H and C I sensed waves of reticence welling out. I could visibly see C looking over the envelopes and self-censoring " I won't take that one- it could be too private."

How powerful our cultures are! How they secretly govern all that we FEEL, THINK and SAY even to ourselves.

I am trying to think about this dispassionately as yesterday was a really strong culture class in which, while playing my role as language teacher, I was also a fascinated student of the cultural things going on.

But not to take sides is very hard. In my heart of hearts I am with the Mediterranean in this and not with the English, German , Dutch and Austrian North. I am close to E reading B's letter with joy and I am far from C in his mood of delicacy and circumspection picking anodyne letters (to save Mario from his folly ?).

It goes back to the battle that rages within me between Piemonte(Father) and Liverpool-Aachen (Mother).

What an inextricable weave of psychiatry and culture.

Mario



Ps: Maybe we could briefly discuss these issues in class before Judy and X another come in at 9.30 ?