

# THAT'S NOT MY NAME

## THE ESSAY

We are all from different countries, which has enabled us to have a more international point of view when working on this project. Some of us are a long way from home and others closer but none of us actually comes from Milan so we all feel that we think and react differently to assignments being away from home. Location and environment are things that have a great impact on how your mind works as far as inspiration and therefore creativity are concerned at some point.

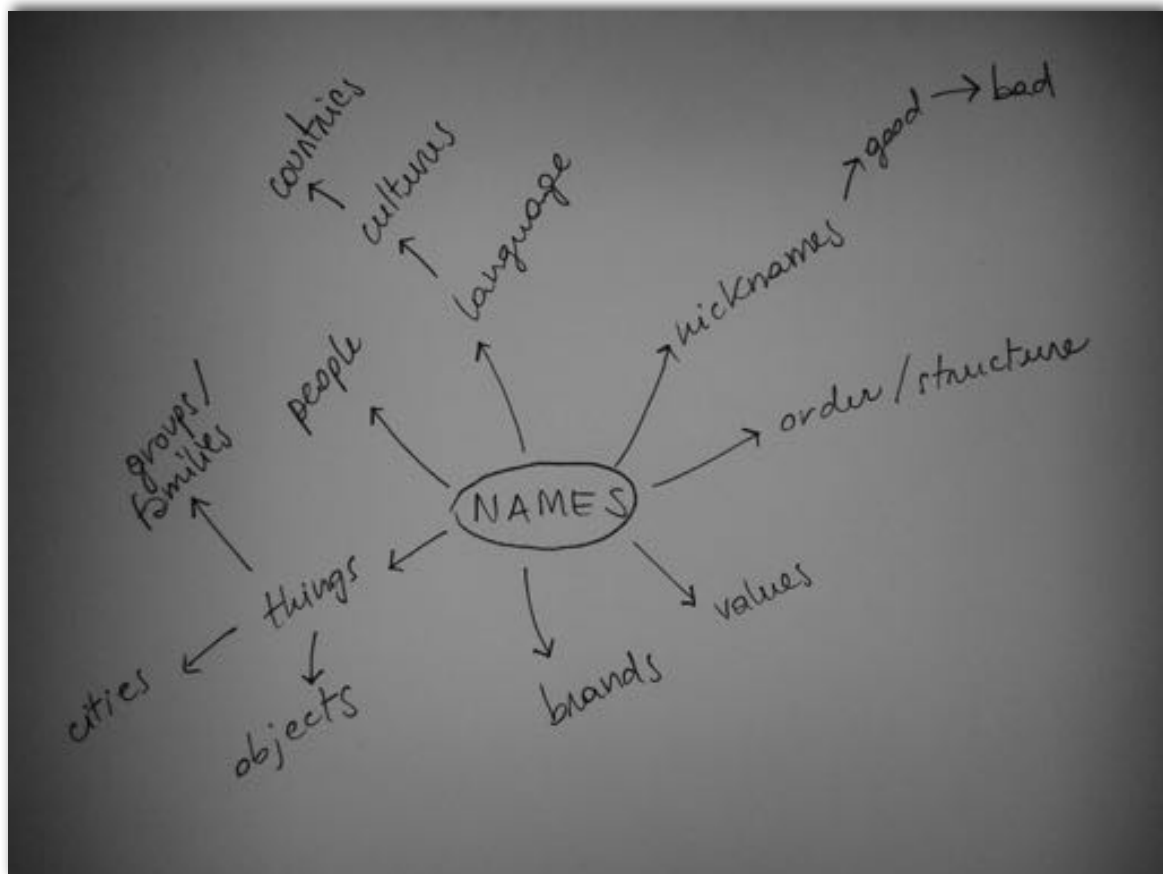
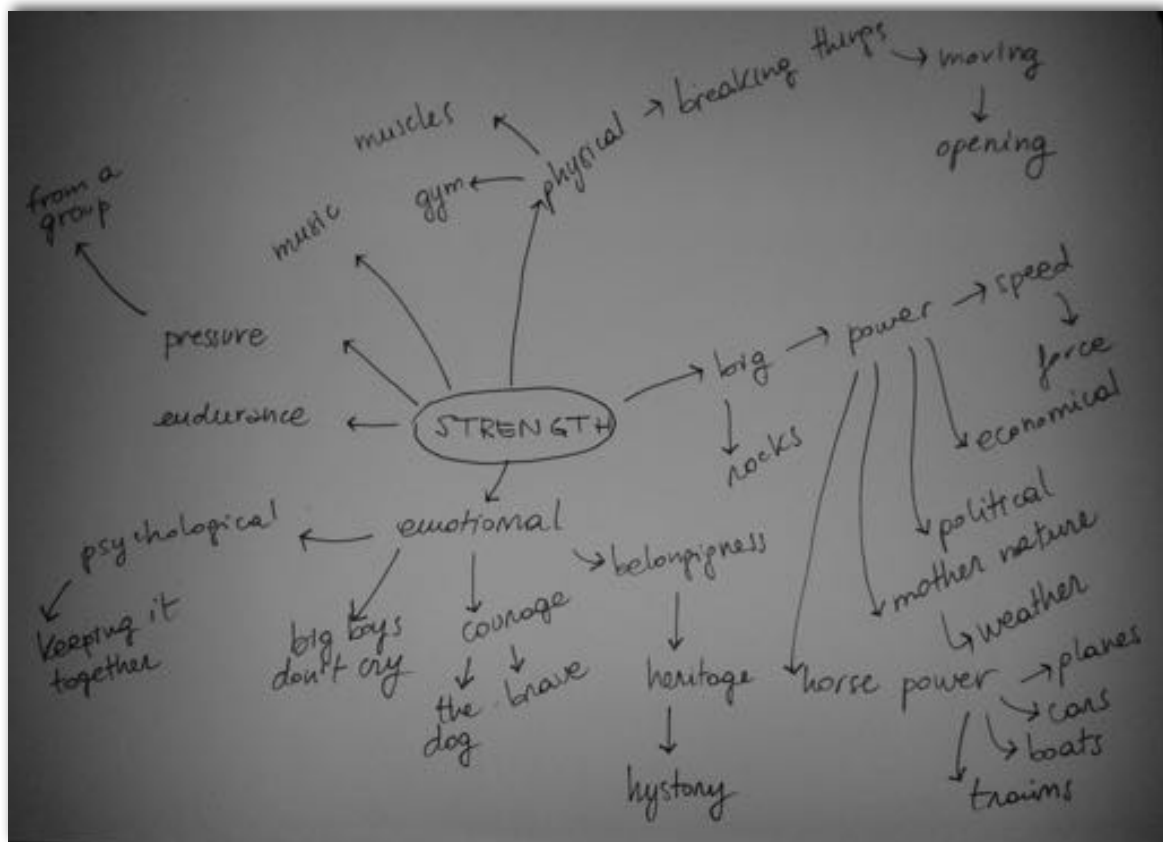
The constraints given to us for this project really triggered off our imagination at the beginning. It was good to have a starting point to begin with and then develop everything starting, in our case, from a keyword. The difficult part was to put everything together in the end. Since all our ideas were coming out from one single word they were encompassing widely different areas and it was hard to close the circle while taking in consideration all the concurrent constraints. So, over all, the constraint stimulated us in the beginning but eventually limited us and thus there is a strong relationship between constraints and creativity.

When we started this project we chose to use the mind mapping and brainstorming methods and we tried to play with words in order to get our creativity flowing. We took one word at a time and wrote down everything that came into our minds. We also tried to divide the terms found into categories to be sure to cover all different kinds of areas related to different meanings.

When we thought that we had enough material, we tried to find some common point.

Working like this trying to *create creativity* out of almost nothing really gives you the opportunity to make mistakes. Mistakes that really aren't actual mistakes, *as this word usually* does not refer to something good, but to us every 'mistake' can lead to a new, fresh and challenging discovery or inspiration. These mistakes are the good ones, since they make us move

forward to unexpected areas. And that's why this is so interesting: you start somewhere and end up somewhere completely out of the picture.



From the map *Names*, branch *nicknames* -> *good/bad* came the idea of *calling names*, that in English means to insult somebody by calling them things that are not their real names, by verbally abusing them; making the person feel that she or he has a lower value in a mean and unfair way. Initially at this stage we had some language difficulties to really understand the meaning of this expression in English since it is not our mother tongue. Nevertheless we sorted this out and everybody was on the same track.

We connected this concept to the branch *pression (pressure)* -> *from a group* from the *strength* map. What happens when people are in a crowd? What do people feel? How do they act? We believe that human beings get strength from being in a crowd and they get the strength to do things they would not do if they were alone. At the same time we were interested in how powerful could be to face a crowd.

In this way we closed the first idea: a powerful crowd calling a person in the center names.

One of the first settings for the photo, as we were working on the "open space" topic we thought of witches who were burnt on an open square in the Middle Age. After thinking over, we found to reconstruct it in our time too hard, since we wanted to take an actual photo but did not wish to make a photomontage nor a collage.

The first concept we have developed was meant to be set on a square. Even though we decided to get rid of the witch, we kept the square. We still had the idea of a crowd staring at one single spot/person.

We wanted to take a photo in which a crowd of white people dressed in black where insulting a colored person wearing white clothes, representing the herd instinct and the enhanced sense of belonging to a group. This way we were merging the concept with the constraint of the picture in black and white. We took the title from *The Ting Ting's* song *That's Not My Name*. By choosing this title we wanted to show the power of the crowd: will the spot person start to believe the things that the others scream? So we thought about changing the title to *That's Not My Name?*. In this way we were showing how a crowd can influence thoughts, make a person stagger. In the end we decided not to go on with this idea because it implied a kind of sad feeling and a negative energy. Also doing so turned out to be a little bit complicated: it's meaning had to be clearly understood. How to convince a random colored person in the street to pose while a crowd screams names to him? We didn't enjoy the racism in it.

In the first concept the title didn't correspond to what we wanted to say but in the end it was what led us to our final concept. We ended up with a more relaxed atmosphere and a touch of humor. The title itself refers to a most personal experience, the one when you travel alone and arrive at a place such as a train station or an airport where a crowd is waiting holding signs with names on them but none of them are yours. Feeling lonely in a crowded place. Feeling powerless because nobody's waiting for you, but at the same time, knowing that you have the power to decide whatever you want to do because you are on your own. We tried to seize this moment from the eyes of the lonely traveler because he or she is the only one that experiences this feeling, while the crowd with signs does not intend to create this bittersweet experience.

Doing so we kept the *strength of the crowd* and the *calling names* but we took out the mean sides.

The constraint of strength in this photo has been created with the names on the signs. The Pope wouldn't have a nun waiting for him like in our photo, nor the other people. We therefore exaggerated the traveler's feeling of powerlessness/impotence. This added a little bit of humor to the picture: it's surreal. The people named on the signs are all people who represent strength in one way or another. The Pope has strength because he is the symbol of God in the Catholic world: in this picture he represents power (political, economic, moral...). Oprah Winfrey represents personal and spiritual strength because of her personality. Magnus Samuelsson represents physical strength for he won the title of "the Strongest man in the World". We took these different fields of *strength* from the map.

As we were choosing the people who had to be on the signs our different nationalities played a certain role. Magnus Samuelsson is Swedish and so he was actually known only by our Swedish member in the group. The Pope is an important person in Italy, which is the nationality of our other group member. The fun thing about this is that the Pope is from Argentina and so is our last group member. Oprah Winfrey was added to represent another culture and a different kind of strength from the other two.

We think that this project really made us think outside the box using the knowledge we gained from class, fixing it by applying it in this work.

As we said before, we didn't want to offend anyone, but we never thought that a person dressed as a nun with a sign saying "Pope Francesco" could have such an effect. When we were in Stazione Centrale shooting, a Turkish guy

speaking German for some unknown reason, came really offended to insult us because he thought it was a blasphemy. When it happened we felt concerned and kind of sad, and then we realized that it was a good sign: this meant that our work had a certain impact on the viewer.