

TASK 2
Due date: May 7th

Short explanation:

For May 7th:

- Distance yourself from your Italian values and internalize your double's values; then
- Live at home for one day as your double.

Write a 2 or 3-page ethnographic account of what you observed in your home through the eyes of your double.

Send it to patrick@boylan.it by May 14th (as a Word document sent by e-mail).

Long explanation:

1. You have (in theory) already imagined 8 maxims that your character seems to say to her/himself every morning when s/he gets up, and that make her/him speak and interact the way s/he does.

NOTE: You may want to change your maxims if you think now that they do not really permit you to think, feel and act as your double. For example, we saw in class that Caterina, whose double is **Benazir Bhutto**, ex Prime Minister of Pakistan (first woman!), **thought** she understood Benazir's cultural values.



But when I asked Caterina what they were, she said: "Democracy, equality for women, liberty." Well, that's what Caterina believes in, too, yet Caterina has a very different way of living from that of Benazir, and very different cultural values, too. **I** also believe in those values, but I have a very different way of living from **both** Caterina's and Benazir's... and different cultural values, too.

So what are Benazir's values? How does she see, feel and act as a Pakistani woman (even if she is Westernized and "emancipated" by our standards)? She is probably a little fatalistic, or at least she does not avoid uncertainty as much as Caterina does. And certainly not as much as I do. So this is already one difference. What are the other cultural differences (direct versus indirect ways of speaking, living for the present versus living for the future, desire to dominate versus desire to be protected, etc. etc.)? And how does this affect her English? Does she try to speak like the upper caste in Britain? Or does she use the English of the Pakistani ruling caste? Is it direct or "flowery"? In other words, does she accommodate to (or distance herself linguistically from) the ex-colonizer, Britain? And what about the present colonizer, America?

In class, we concluded that Caterina did not really understand Benazir. Or rather, Caterina understood Benazir **ONLY** to the extent that Benazir had some of the same ideals as Caterina has ("democracy," "equal rights," "liberty"...). But perhaps, because of her culture, ideology and personality, Benazir practices these ideals in ways that Caterina would **NEVER** do. Or at least, never as an Italian...

But, despite the differences, Caterina CAN, if she chooses, want to be like Benazir for one day! Caterina can decide to WANT the things that Benazir wants, even if normally Caterina would never want those things. For one day. As Benazir's double.

So this is an example of what each student must do. Students must ask themselves if they really understand and appreciate (and want to live) their

double's culture to the extent that it is different from theirs but nonetheless desirable (for a day, at least).

Once students have defined their double's cultural values, they must make 8 maxims. They can use the maxims they already made for Task 1 IF THEY STILL THINK THEY ARE VALID.

Here is an example of VALID MAXIMS. Let's imagine that you want to be, for a day, a Crocodile Dundee kind of Australian. In that case, you could choose as your maxims:

1. "Everyone's equal so I will call *mio padre* and *mia madre*, NOT "papà" and "mamma" but, instead, by their first names ("Luigi", "Pina"). I will tell dirty jokes to them (and to everyone, even a teacher or a priest)... "

Normally you would never have this crude directness as a value. But as Crocodile Dundee, you can live that value for a day.

2. "Fancy language is for lawyers and women (neither to be trusted); so just say what you want directly. Or just take what you want."

Same thing.

3. "Nature -- and that means dirt, too -- is good. But civilization -- armchairs, fancy clothes, bidets, ceremonies, titles, and the subjunctive (*congiuntivo*) -- all these things are shit!"

Normally you not want to abandon your aesthetic values as an Italian. But you CAN abandon them for a day if you choose to live as Crocodile Dundee.

This, then, is how a student could transform Crocodile Dundee's cultural values (directness, crudeness, natural functions...) into maxims.

2. When you have your 8 maxims that transform you into your double, write **8 more maxims** that make you **stop being an Italian**.

Cioè, scrivere 8 massime "italianissime", quelle che sembrano guidare il tuo comportamento da italiano e che ti fanno comunicare ed interagire "da italiano/a" con altri italiani. Solo che, a differenza della lista in inglese, dopo ogni massima, apri una parentesi e scrivi un buon motivo per criticarla, o addirittura per ripudiarla per una giornata -- cioè, una 'counter-maxim'. Non è necessario che questa "counter maxim" sia una massima che il vostro sosia potrebbe dire, basta che sia convincente. Cioè basta che ti faccia mettere in discussione i valori che hai sempre accettato come "normali". Comunque, se riesci a fare "counter massime" che valgono anche come massime per il tuo sosia, tanto meglio.

Ecco alcune delle tue contro-massime se tu fossi Crocodile Dundee:

Io come italiano: "Non alzare la cresta."

Io come Crocodile Dundee: "If you got it, show it"

Io come italiano: "La mamma è la mamma, le starò sempre vicina!"

Io come Crocodile Dundee: "Better on your own" (no dependence)

Io come italiano: "Anche se colto in flagrante, negare."

Io come Crocodile Dundee: "Admit your guilt, make amends."

3. Choose a day (Saturday or Sunday) to spend with your family as your double. (You probably will not resist the whole day, but try as long as you can.) When you wake up in the morning, first repeat your Italian maxims: read the "positive" maxim (the one in Italian) **silently** and then say the counter-maxims (the ones in English) **out loud** to repudiate your Italian being. If you share your bedroom with others, do it in the bathroom, to be alone! Do this twice.

Then repeat out loud the 8 maxims that you wrote down as your double. Do it twice.

And that's it: you're ready! Open the bathroom door and walk out as your double. You will be him or her for the rest of the day (or as long as you resist).

REMEMBER OUR CONVENTION: You, as your double, miraculously know perfect Italian because you wanted to visit Rome so you learned it before coming. In addition, you want to see a real home in Rome so you have decided to live, not in a hotel, but in an ordinary house (the house where your *Anagrafe* self normally lives). Your parents have rented to you the room or bed belonging to your *Anagrafe* self (because your *Anagrafe* self has run away to England, so the bed is empty). The family treats you as their son (or daughter) who has run away. To humor them (*per farli contenti*), you play the roll of their son (or daughter) – but you are really your double.

4. During the day:

-- note everything you now see as strange in your home life. This includes your family's ways of speaking, of interacting, and of course of making judgments. It also includes their clothing, eating habits, home furnishings, moral precepts, whatever your family jokes about, political opinions, choice of TV programs, way of greeting (kissing?), family power structure – everything, IF you begin to see it as "strange". If you don't see anything as strange, if everything seems normal, then you have remained your Italian self.

-- note every pressure you feel to conform to your Italian self. Yes, that's right: your family will send you constant messages to "be normal" (= "be Italian") – note them down. Even the way your home is organized will be a constant message to "be normal" (= "be Italian").

Make written notes since they help you remember details better: but do this without your family noticing!! The best solution is to go periodically to your room to write down what you have observed in the preceding hour.

-- note HOW **YOUR** LANGUAGE CHANGES, EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE SPEAKING ITALIAN, WHEN YOU EXPRESS YOURSELF AS YOUR DOUBLE. The words will be Italian, but the way of expressing yourself will be the way your double would speak, gesticulate, send facial messages, etc. (Also take note of the reactions of your family to your new way of expressing yourself.) This is the key part of this exercise because it shows you what English is. English is not words (in fact, you are using Italian words). It is the **will to mean** things in a particular way.

If you feel you are shocking your parents too much, stay in the background as much

as possible and **observe** your family members more than interacting with them. If you feel during the day that you are slipping back into your Italian *persona*, go to your room and read the 8 Italian counter-maxims silently and then the 16 English maxims out loud again; this should "recharge your batteries".

THAT EVENING, write your observations down as an Ethnographic Report. You must write the report as your character would have written it after spending a day with your family, to explain to a friend back home what life is like in an Italian family. Use her/his kind of English.

Your report should contain the following information:

- a. Your Italian Maxims & Counter-Maxims plus your double's maxims
- b. What you saw and heard that was "strange"
- c. The pressures you felt to conform
- d. The values that (b.) and (c.) represent.
- e. The different way that you expressed yourself in Italian (you used perfect Italian but you should have spoken the way your double would have expressed himself or herself). **In your report, give a few examples of real sentences that you said and the reactions that these sentences provoked.**

Finally, draw a line like this:

_____ and

f. *tornando nella tua persona italiana abituale, dopo aver scritto la parte in inglese della Relazione Finale, descrivi in italiano l'esperienza complessivamente, ciò che essa ti ha insegnato -- insomma il suo valore educativo o meno, ai fini dell'apprendimento della lingua inglese. Puoi anche rivelare se i tuoi hanno chiamato la Neuro. Il tutto, sia la parte in inglese che la parte in italiano, in due o tre pagine scritte al computer, secondo il consueto modello:*

margin ↓	margin ↓	
Type on a computer, if possible; if not, very clear handwriting ! Activity ? for " (name of course and module) "		
double space		
Name, Family Name	Group X	Date: _____
double space		

Read here >  to know what you will be marked on.