

MiraMag 12

A free magazine by Modern Language students, La Sapienza University, Rome



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A Farewell to... MiraMag

Dear readers,

We don't know whether we are coming back or not next year (probably not), so we want to thank you for reading our Mag and supporting us. We have loved working for you... most of the time - but sometimes we were so stressed!

Don't worry, these last articles will be as interesting as the past ones. We have also received a few contributions from students from Tenerife who were passionate readers of MiraMag over the past year.

**Enjoy this issue... And goodbye for now,
your Mira Eds**

- Special thanks to Noeleen Hargan -

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London, I'll be back!

By Annamaria Orlandi

I was 21 years old and I hadn't seen London yet. Unusual for a language student, isn't it? I believed it was a grey city where people were only interested in working. When I started University, all my friends would talk about London, British culture, British music and many of them were thinking of doing Erasmus there. So finally, I decided to go abroad too. Destination? London, of course, and my boyfriend came with me.

First day – 15 April

It was a sunny day! So London is not always grey! That's the first prejudice overcome!

We checked into a hotel in Notting Hill then we went to Hyde Park. In the park there's a beautiful lake where we went rowing. It is called The Serpentine because of its curved shape. There's also an area where public speaking is allowed, known as Speaker's Corner. I tried to speak too but nobody

paid any attention to me. The park is inhabited by a huge number of squirrels.

At 11 am we were very hungry so we found a café where we had a "traditional" English breakfast. In the afternoon we decided to go for a walk in The City, the oldest part of London. Throughout the city we found red double-decker buses and the famous red telephone boxes. Then we walked along Oxford Street, Europe's busiest shopping street. We also visited St. Paul's Cathedral, built in a Renaissance style. Then we admired Westminster Abbey, a Gothic church and the traditional place of coronation, marriage and burial for English monarchs. Many important people are buried there: William Shakespeare and Charles Dickens (in the so-called Poet's Corner), the Protestant Queen Elizabeth I and the Catholic Mary, as well as Charles Darwin.

My first day in London ended with a romantic ride on the London Eye.

Second day – 16 April

The second day's programme included a visit to a couple of museums. We had to get the Tube: The London Underground, which is the oldest in the world.

In the morning we visited the British Museum which has more than seven million objects from all continents, particularly objects from ancient Roman, Egyptian and Greek civilizations. There is no admission fee!

In the afternoon we went to The National Gallery in Trafalgar Square. It contains a collection of fine European paintings of many different styles from the 13th to the 19th century. Among them there are some very important and rare works by painters such as Michelangelo, Caravaggio and Leonardo.

At 7 p.m. we saw Othello at the Globe, a reconstruction of the original Globe Theatre destroyed by a fire on 29 June 1613. This was the icing on the cake!

Third day – 17 April

The day of our departure came and we wanted to buy souvenirs for our friends. So the third day was totally dedicated to shopping! In London there are many covered, outdoor and street markets and there is something for everyone!

We visited Portobello Market and Petticoat Lane where there are many antiquarians and junk dealers. Almost everything is for sale at a very low price. I bought a second-hand dress, some costume jewellery and old English books.

The moment had come to leave London, but we didn't have enough time to see all the many interesting places so I decided to go back this summer and I already know what I would like to see: the Science Museum, Harrods, Madame Tussauds and much more...



The Two Faces of Football

By Brenda Gutierrez

Do you know something which can join and separate people in an equally drastic way? Well, if you are thinking about football, you're right.

It is a sport that arouses passions all over the world. There are ninety-one first division football leagues that make people forget about their differences when they support their team.

This sense of unity is even greater when it comes to each country's national team. In this case, they overcome their loyalty to a league team. Fans of F.C. Internazionale Milano and A.C. Milan in Italy, or Real Madrid and F.C. Barcelona in Spain, forget their rivalry in order to respectively cheer for Italy or Spain.

The Good and the Bad in Football

Like most other things, football has its pros and cons. The real fan can be a great *tifoso* in Italy or a fantastic *peña* in Spain but there are also supporters who ostensibly go to the stadium to support their team but only show disrespect for the opposing team's fans, and sometimes they also get into fights.

There are also episodes of good behaviour in football: Eric Abidal, who plays for Barcelona, was diagnosed with cancer. He came back on the field after only 3 months, when Barcelona faced their great rivals Real Madrid. When he came onto the pitch, all the fans, players and the Real Madrid management team –forgetting their quarrels with Barcelona - rose to applaud him.

Money in Football

Of course you can't talk about football without mentioning money. The huge attraction that football has for millions of people around the world generates an economic power that is not comparable with many other sports.

It is particularly interesting that World Cups will be held in newly industrialized, emerging countries such as Brazil 2014 and Senegal 2022. And how can we forget South Africa 2010? Even though the income brought by tourism was huge, the country spent a lot of money in order to provide the appropriate facilities.

Many argue that in such countries where people live below the poverty line and where infant mortality is high, only football magnates and politicians enjoy the financial benefits. The question is: Is this right? We should really think about that.



Spain's Best Styles of Music

By Irù Jesus Rodriguez Navarro

Flamenco

Flamenco is the traditional genre of music and dance of Andalusia, Spain. It probably originated in Cadiz and Seville, Spain around the 18th century. However, this kind of music has a large following all over Spain, indeed all over the world. In fact, Flamenco is so famous in Japan that there are more academies there than in Spain itself.

The autonomous region where Flamenco is most frequently performed is Andalusia, naturally! The characteristic instruments used to produce this music are Flamenco guitar, the classical guitar, *cajon* (or flamenco box drum, a wooden box which is drummed with the hands in order to produce a melody), and finally, simply using the palms of ones hands, which is a very easy way of creating music and a good substitute if there are no guitars to hand.

The most important flamenco musicians in Spain are Los Chichos, Lola Flores (who died in 1995), Estopa, Junco, La Húngara, Chiquetete, and many hundreds more.

The best way to enjoy Flamenco is to go along to a *Tablao*, which is a bar or club where Flamenco is performed. I really recommend it!

Spanish Pop

The term Spanish Pop refers to pop music which evolved from 1950s Spanish rock, whose most famous singers were Los Bravos, Los Brincos, Los Rокeros and Los Canarios.

The main instruments used in this style are the electric guitar, voice and drums. The songs belonging to this genre are very well-known in Spain because they are our greatest hits promoted by the Spanish media.

The most important performers are Miguel Bosé, Ana Torroja, Ana Belén, Rosana, David Bisbal, Rosa, Amaia Montero and David Bustamante.

If you want to listen to the best Spanish Pop music, you should come along to the Premios Dial festival where some receive awards. It is celebrated at the beginning of each year in the island of Tenerife.

Latin Music

Latin Music is a collection of styles which brings together music from Latin America, principally from Venezuela, Colombia, Puerto Rico and Cuba. These styles have different names for example Bachata, Vallenato, Reggaeton, Salsa, Merengue, Changa, or Cumbia.

In Spain, Latin Music is listened to above all in the Canary Islands because there are strong connections between the islands and the various Latin American countries.

The main instruments used in those styles are the drums, trumpets, maracas, and saxophone. There are innumerable Latin Music singers, but the most important are Carlos Baute, Celia Cruz (who died in 2003), Los Diablitos de Colombia and Luis Miguel del Amargue.

If you want to enjoy Latin Music without leaving Europe, I recommend you to go to Mambo's Disco, on Tenerife, the biggest island of the Canary Islands.

The Generation Gap

By Veronica Miaci, Veronica Saputo, Ilaria Vitali

Times are changing and many people wonder if the values are changing too. As Isaac Rodríguez Hernández, student of La Laguna University in Tenerife, points out “I wonder whether the things our parents and grandparents tell us are still true!”.

If we listen to our grandparents’ stories from their past we see that they want to emphasize the big difference between the way they used to live and think and the way we live and think today. This difference in opinions and behaviours between young and old people is called by many the Generation Gap.

The Pew Research Center, an American public opinion research organization that studies attitudes toward politics, the press and public policy issues, carried out a survey from July to August 2009 among people aged 16 and 65+.

According to this research, 87% of respondents said there is a big gap in the way of using the Internet, computers and new technologies, and 86% said there is a big gap in the kind of music they like.

Moreover, about 80% of the people interviewed said young people and adults hold different moral values, have a different work ethic, and differ in the respect they show other people.

About 70% said they are different in their political beliefs, in their tolerance for races, and in religious beliefs.

“Around the notions of morality and work ethic, the differences in point of view are pretty much felt across the board”, claims Paul Taylor, vice president of the Pew Research Center. He also cited a greater tolerance among younger people such as support of gay marriage and interracial relationship.

The biggest perceived difference emerged in the use of technology, as shown in the following table.

Use/ Age	18-30	65-74	Over 75
Mobile for calls	64%	6%	---
Internet daily	75%	40%	16%
Texting	87%	11%	---

Taylor points out that today there is “more of a general outlook, a different point of view, a general set of moral values”, and compares nowadays with the strong generation gap of the past. Taking everything into account, it could be argued that lots of people perceive a generation gap.

Out of curiosity, in April 2011, Veronica Miaci carried out a small survey among twenty 3rd year Modern Language students of La Sapienza, aged 20-29: everybody asserted that the generation gap exists.

Moreover, 90 % think young and older people are different in the way they use computers, the Internet and other kinds of new technologies, and 50 % in the music they like.

Only 30 % of respondents said the generations differ in their work ethic, in their political beliefs and in the respect they show other people. More than 50 % perceive generational differences in terms of religious beliefs and attitudes towards different races and groups.

Of course, the two surveys were carried out among very different groups of people since the Italian survey only takes account of the opinion of young people. It is clear from the American survey that when older people are interviewed too the gap in music tastes and moral values seems to be wider.

The only area in which the generation gap appears to be perceived in almost the same way both in the American and the Italian survey is in the use of computers, the Internet and other kinds of new technologies.

War Children

By Pablo Sanchez Arias, Ilaria Vitali and Irene Pellecchia

At times of war we're all the losers
("War child", Cranberries)

The conflicts and riots in northern Africa are unfortunately yet another example of how war can affect people's lives, especially poor civilians. But who are the worst affected by war? Unfortunately, the children.

That's the merciless truth! Children always suffer the worst consequences of warfare, including famine, malaria, tuberculosis, sexual abuse and, in the case of war, abduction for military exploitation. Children are taken by force, given a gun and sent to fight against the enemy (who might also be their own family) with no food or water for many days. Drugs are also used to alleviate physical and psychological problems. Their childhood and adolescence is therefore lost forever.

This pitiful side of the war has been analyzed by a number of people. In Italy the journalist Giulio Albanese talks about his African experience with some kids who eventually escaped the brutality of warfare in Uganda and Sierra Leone in his book *Soldatini di piombo-la questione dei bambini soldato*. He stated that "Children are a sort of loot [...] they're subjected to a regime of total obedience and sometimes forced into desperate measures such as placing mines or attempting Suicide [...]. Almost all of them have scabies or other skin diseases. [...] Looking at their faces you may wonder what kind of future all these children could have". (translated from the Italian by the authors of this article).

"Sometimes you gotta lose to win. Never give up. Never give in."
("Forced to sin", Emmanuel Jal)

But as there's a positive side in everything, we want to remind you that there are many organizations fighting in favour of children's rights, such as UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) a United Nations branch.

UNICEF was set up in 1946 to provide emergency food and healthcare for children in those

countries torn apart by the devastation of World War II, and is still active today in developing countries.

Now let's read a story. Have you ever heard about the gospel-rapper Emmanuel Jal?

Well, as reported on the MTV website, he was born in southern Sudan around 1980 and his mother died when he was still a child, so he was forced to join the military training camp in Ethiopia, where he became a child soldier. He then left Ethiopia and went to Waat where he was saved by his protector Emma McCune who took him to Kenya. He

received an education, began singing around 1998 and formed several musical groups.

As he stated on www.ted.com, music has been a kind of therapy for him as it "is the only thing that has power to enter your cell system, your mind, your heart, your soul and spirit and can even influence the way you live without even you knowing. Music is the only thing that can make you want to wake up your bed and shake your leg, without even wanting to do it."

Jal has always been really grateful to God and to Emma for giving him the chance to have a new life with a good education and he fought in order to build a school in Sudan. "I've been on a hunger strike for 437 days, only eating one meal a day, until I raise the money to build the school.", he said to 125 Online.

With his songs he shows strength and gratitude, instead of rage and pain, which would have been comprehensible after a negative experience like the one he had. The fact that he has a lot of positive feelings about his life is important to reflect upon: maybe suffering makes people stronger and more aware of how significant life, every kind of life, is.



Around the world

Darfur (Sudan): it is estimated that nowadays about 17,000 child soldiers are part of government militias, and between 2,500 and 5,000 children are part of the opposition group, the Sudan's people's liberation Army (SPLA).

Iraq: In Iraq Saddam Hussein's regime trained young boys between 12 and 17 years of age. Even in the 2003 American invasion of Iraq, U.S. soldiers had to fight children combatants.

Myanmar (Burma): the country with the highest use of child-soldiers. As the NGO Human Rights Watch reported, more than 70,000 boys are enlisted in the government's militias.

Europe has experienced kids' exploitation in the war industry, such as in the former socialist **Yugoslavia**, where many teenage soldiers fought in paramilitary units during the so-called Yugoslav wars in the early 1990s.

But worse was the **Chechen** war where children as young as 11 (including girls) were part of the military or were used for suicide bombings.

South America: it has been estimated that in Colombia's warfare an estimated 11,000 children as young as 8 years old were involved with left-wing guerrillas or right-wing paramilitaries, according to Human Rights Watch .



Forever Young: review of a novel

By Raffaella Sardella

The latest novel by Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, is a stunning, heartbreaking story about friendship and love, but also a thrilling, page-turning mystery. Not only, at its very heart this sensitive novel is a very deep reflection on human fears and hopes. As readers reach the final

Chapters, they will understand that this is a story about how afraid of dying we are.

Never Let Me Go tells the story of Kathy, Ruth and Tommy. The three of them grew up together at Hailsham, a mysterious and isolated English boarding school. The story of Kathy's friendship with Ruth and the love triangle between the two girls and Tommy is closely related to their experience of growing up and slowly discovering more about who they are and what their purpose in life is.

The reader slowly discovers that the kids taught at Hailsham don't have parents, they have originals. They don't have teachers, they have guardians. The most important thing is to have healthy bodies because they are bodies from which people out of Hailsham will take vital organs for transplant.

What shocks and disturbs the reader is the idea that other humans can be used as a supply of organs. At a certain point in the novel it is explained that since people are accustomed to having cures for all sort of diseases; no-one objects to this use of human beings as a supply for spare parts.

The reader will have no problems condemning the use of people as organs donors, but Ishiguro succeeds in establishing the fear that scientific progress could get out of hand when it

comes to matter of life and death.

Kazuo Ishiguro describes his novel in a behind-the-scenes-interview of the film inspired by it. He says that he wanted to focus on "a bunch of young people whose lives were going to be shorter. By doing that (...) we would get a new perspective on something that we barely look at but we know all about, which is the fact that we do get older and at some point we are gonna go."

But despite this, his purpose was not to talk about death. In the same interview Ishiguro

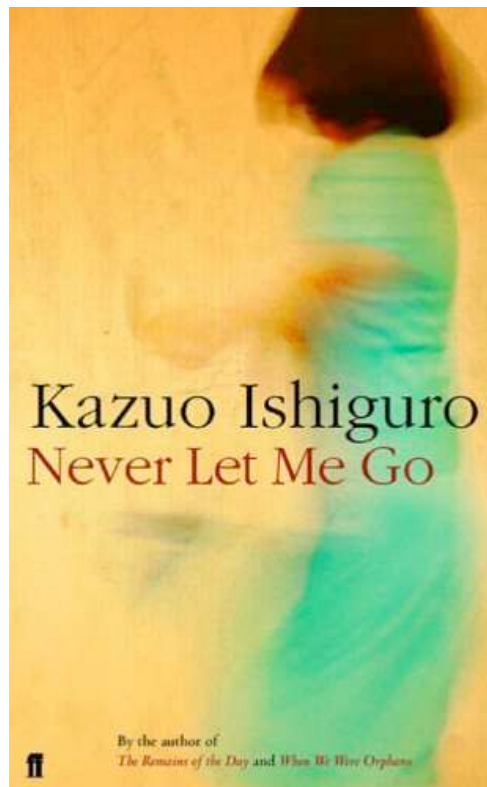
says " I was more interested in the question when you know that this [death] is a backdrop to your life what things become important, what things really matter?"

According to John Harrison (Guardian, 26 February 2005), "This extraordinary and, in the end, rather frighteningly clever novel (...) is about why we don't explode, why we don't just wake up one day and go sobbing and crying down the street".

The characters of this story know that they are going to die soon, but instead of feeling depressed and hopeless, they try to live happy lives while they can, and they even take pride in what they are doing. As

they approach their 30s they can feel death nearing and things start to assume a more relative value, the hope of just a few years together gives them the strength to declares their real feelings. Kathy is happy to be a good carer and Tommy thinks that he is doing a good job as a donor.

The message of this book is this: we all know that we are going to die but what if this were to happen soon? Living like there is no tomorrow doesn't mean doing everything we want, but always trying to give our best and being good to others. Maybe we could start to think more like donors, quit postponing things and try to be happy now.



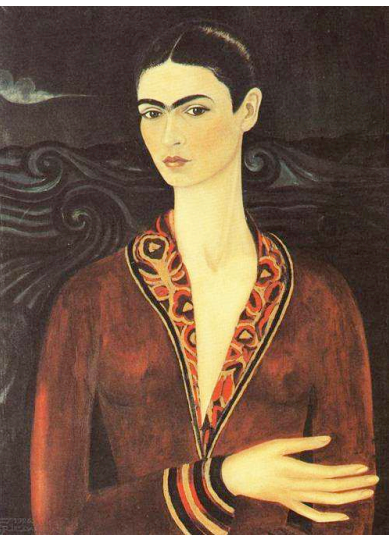
Larga Vida A Nuestra Frida! (Long live our Frida!)

By Federica Mancuso

Magdalena Carmen Frida Kahlo y Calderon (1907-1954) was a Mexican painter and her tragic life is reflected in her paintings.

As Mike Brooks, the author of the website *fridakahlofans.com*, explains, she was a passionate and ambitious girl but her dreams were roughly struck down by a terrible bus accident in which a post pierced her from the spine to the vagina when she was 18, forcing her to stay to bed for a long period of convalescence. During this terrible time, she started devoting herself to painting as a way of pouring out all her anger, and her recurrent subject was her self-portrait, and Brooks found out she justified this choice saying that, since she was always alone, she was the subject she knew best.

Frida created about 200 drawings, paintings, sketches and water-colours, all of them strongly connected with her emotional sorrows. Her first work was a self-portrait called *Self-portrait in a Velvet Dress*, painted in 1926. At that time, she and her first boyfriend, Alejandro Gomez Arias, had broken up, although she was still terribly in love. Frida decided to give Alejandro her painting, hoping for him to come back. The strategy worked and they became close again.



For this painting the author took inspiration from Botticelli's *Venus* and her interest for the Italian style of the Renaissance period is visible also in other works, such as *Portrait of Alicia Galante* and *Portrait of Adriana* (M.Brooks 2008).

In 1929 Frida married the artist Diego Rivera. The painting *Frida and Diego Rivera* (1931) is based on a wedding photograph. Rivera is

portrayed as an artist, while she only as the adoring wife, since she claimed she didn't paint for work but just for delight.

Unfortunately Frida had to face other problems which marked her life and consequently her paintings. She lost a baby after just 3 months of pregnancy and after a short time discovered that her husband had betrayed her with her younger sister Cristina. Although she and Diego were a sort of 'open couple' because Diego was unable to be faithful, she felt disrespected nonetheless. It was a very dark period for the artist and as a consequence she didn't paint anything for almost a year.

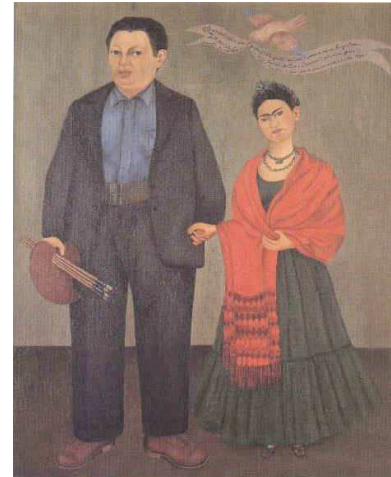
The next year she started painting again and created another masterpiece, *A Few Small Nips* (1935), in which she projected her personal pain into another woman's misfortune. Frida had read about a man who had killed his wife for being unfaithful; he justified himself saying that the cuts on his wife's body were just a few small nips (M.Brooks 2008).

As Brooks writes, Frida felt profoundly connected with the dead woman because she felt murdered by life, since the persons she loved had betrayed her.

Despite all their misadventures, Frida never stopped loving Diego until her death after 25 years of marriage. Words from her secret diary show how she adored him and how totally devoted she was to him:

"Nobody will never know how much I love Diego. I don't want anything to hurt him, nothing to bother him and rob him of the energy he needs for living. For living as he likes; for painting, seeing, loving, eating, sleeping, being by himself, being with someone. But I'd never want him to be sad."

Frida used to define herself a 'cripple' because of her physical problems, but nothing stopped her from living as she liked. Despite her illness, she enjoyed her life fully, more than any healthy woman could. Great determination, great fortitude, and a great talent!



ARE YOU SPENDING YOUR SUMMER IN ROME?

Here you can find MiraMag editors' suggestions about what to see!
Enjoy!

The image features a central map of Rome's subway system with several red pushpins marking specific locations. Surrounding the map are images of various Roman landmarks and museums, each with a black callout box containing a website URL:

- St. Peter's Basilica:** <http://archeoroma.beniculturali.it/musei/museo-nazionale-romano-palazzo-altemps/>
- Colosseum:** www.palazzoesposizioni.it and <http://www.il-colosseo.it/>
- St. Peter's Square:** <http://mv.vatican.va/>
- Castel Sant'Angelo:** www.inrometoday.it
- Fontana del Gallo:** www.inrometoday.it

Other landmarks shown include the Vatican Museums, the Pantheon, and the Trevi Fountain. The map also displays various subway lines (FR1, FR2, FR3, FR4, FR5, FR6) and station names.