

MIRAMAG 4

A magazine by Modern Language students, Lettere e Filosofia, La Sapienza University, Rome



Cover photo: graffiti by Drow and Wolz

UNIVERSITY CHAT

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The Back Page

ARE TEACHERS NORMAL?

Find out in the time it takes to go to the coffee shop, get yourself a cup of coffee....

Interviews by Chiara Petrilli and Chiara Pietropaola

Name? Irene Ranzato

Married or single? Single

Where and what did you study? Sapienza, Literature and History, and then Modern Languages at Tor Vergata.

Were you a good or bad student? I got good marks but I seldom attended and this is one of my few regrets.

What were you like in your twenties? Always optimistic but more anxious and worried than I am today. Planning to live in London.

Who is your favourite colleague? Tricky question - so I'll answer diplomatically by referring only to my "peers" (*docenti a contratto*). I have long conversations with my colleagues and friends Marco Ravaioli, Mattia Bilardello and Andrea Peghinelli, so I've had a chance to form a very good opinion of their work and their views on life in general.

Have you ever wished to make a student disappear with a magic wand? No. On the contrary I would often love to know a bit more about them.

Why do you live in Italy? I wonder why.

Left or Right? I take it as a rule not to answer political questions but I'm sure you can guess.

Choose a politician to complain and another to praise. Too many I can think of. Concerning only head of states, I complain about Gheddafi and praise Barack Obama.

University reform by Irene Ranzato? I have no idea.

Your favourite US president? President Bartlet from *The West Wing* and President Palmer from *24* TV series.

Irene Ranzato in her freetime? I like reading and watching films, sometimes (but only sometimes) cooking for friends.

Favourite TV show? *Twin Peaks*, *Six Feet Under*, *Friends*, *Life on Mars* (UK), *In Treatment*, *The Office* (UK).

Favourite book? Too many. I will limit the range to the 19th century (my favourite for literature): *Persuasion*, *Emma*, *The Portrait of a Lady*, *Madame Bovary*, *Le rouge et le noir*.

Favourite movie? Again too many. Here I'll give only a sentimental, not strictly artistic answer: *Chariots of Fire*, *The Portrait of a Lady*, *The Age of Innocence*.

Favourite band? This I'll answer giving only the bands I've loved since I was a teenager (many more were added along the way): The Beatles (John Lennon; I used to sign my name as Irene Lennon...), Pink Floyd (Roger Waters forever), Bruce Springsteen, Queen.

Favourite quote? "God made me for China, but he also made me fast" from *Chariots of Fire*, for reasons too long to explain; and

practically every line of Marquise de Merteuil in the book *Les liaisons dangereuses* and the film *Dangerous liaisons*, two for all: "Like most intellectuals, he's intensely stupid" and "When one woman strikes at the heart of another she seldom misses, and the wound is invariably fatal".

The most unpleasant job you've ever had? One day as a hotel maid in London.

Your next trip? Always London, as soon as I can. But I've never seen New York and I'd love to.



Photo supplied by Irene Ranzato

... and drink it



Graffiti (detail), Tate Modern

Name? Anna Rita Gerardi

Married or single? I think I'm still considered a newly-wed...even if I married last year

Where did you study? McGill University, Montreal Canada

Were you a good or bad student? I was neither..I'd say average, but it's not my job to judge myself.

What were you like in your twenties? Well, that wasn't too long ago! ...so I can certainly say I was more or less like I am now, with maybe a few less worries and a tad crazier.



Photo supplied by AnnaRita Gerardi

Who is your favourite colleague? I get on well with all my colleagues. It's important to have a good relationship with everyone, because a happy staff works well. However, if you want to know who I call up and chat about everything under the sky that would be Nick (Toll).

Have you ever wished to make a student disappear with a magic wand? Why?

Ahahahaahaha Honestly I've never wished for a student to disappear, but I suppose a few have wanted me to disappear!

Why do you live in Italy? It was my dream to live here... I never thought I would "survive". My move

to Italy was supposed to be temporary, temporary has turned into 13 years...

Left or Right? I write with my right hand :P – if this is a political question, I quote my American cousins and plead the fifth.

Choose a politician to complain and another to praise. Well, that's a very difficult question, there are far too many to complain about, and far too few to praise. However, one woman certainly stands out, I really admire all the work that Queen Rania Al Abdullah has done.

University reform by Anna Rita Gerardi? I think we need an "education reform" on all levels, one that fits the Italian people, and not one based on foreign models.

Your favourite US president? That's easy, John F. Kennedy because of his battle for civil rights.

Anna Rita Gerardi in her free time? I practice yoga. It helps free the mind and helps me to relax, but I also Facebook, play video games, go for walks, go to pubs with my friends and listen to music. Teachers are Normal people too!

Favourite TV show? Only one? Ok. *Gilmore Girls*. But I'm a big fan of *Friends*, *Grey's Anatomy* and *House*.

Favourite book? *Catcher in the Rye*.

Favourite movie? I don't really have a favorite movie.

Favourite band? My all-time favourite band is U2, I also enjoy Depeche Mode, 3 Doors Down, but I cannot deny I have an unexplainable love for Bon Jovi.

Favourite quote? It's a Chinese proverb: "the greatest sin in teaching is to be boring."

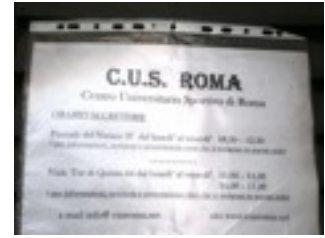
The most unpleasant job you've had in your life? I spent my university career working as a secretary at an import/export company, the job wasn't unpleasant per se, but the hours were long.

Your next trip? Nothing big at the moment. I'm hoping to getaway to London for a week-end sometime in May and I might also go to the Tremiti islands - let's keep our fingers crossed for that one.



FITNESS + FUN

By Jennifer Romeo



When I asked my English 3 classmates at Villa Mirafiori about their use of the facilities offered by the Centro Universitario Sportivo (CUS), I learned that most had never used them at all. Very few students appear to know what the letters CUS actually stand for. In the interview below, Modern Language student Ylenia Gallo, a regular user of the CUS, provides some details to fill what seems to be a common gap in students' knowledge of the services offered by our University. Read on, and find out how to have fun, get fit and pay little.

How did you find out about the CUS?

Through the Internet, by surfing the Uni website.

In your view, is the CUS good value for money?

Obviously, since it's so cheap you can't expect all the comforts and equipment you can find in most ordinary gyms. There is the bare minimum, but that's fine considering the low price.

What do you enjoy most and least about the CUS?

The thing I enjoy most is that you can easily meet other students in a non-academic setting. What I least enjoy, but it's a small point, is that if you're taking a course which has compulsory reservation, you have to re-enroll every three months.

Places of this kind are often good for meeting people and making friends. Have you made any new friends while using CUS facilities?

Yes, I've met lots of new people and started several new friendships.

Have you ever seen (at the CUS) anyone you already knew from Uni?

It has happened, but only once or twice actually. I think that using CUS facilities gives you more opportunities to meet and eventually become friends with people also from other faculties, who may be slightly older or younger than you.

What is attendance like at your sports classes?

Generally the courses you don't have to book are overcrowded. The others may be quite full, but aren't overcrowded.

Do you know if anything is being done to improve the situation?

Yes I know that new courses have been added to cope with the large number of participants.

For certain sports classes, it is necessary to book. Is this a problem, in your view?

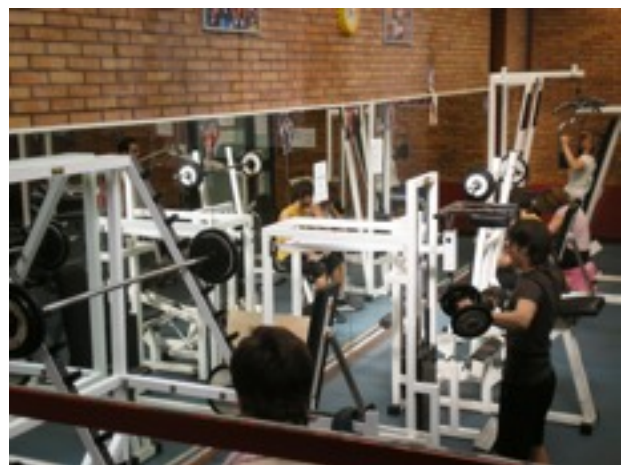
I think it's necessary because there are so many of us, especially for dance classes and martial arts, and it isn't possible for the teacher to work with more than 20 people at a time.

Have you ever been prevented from attending a sports class because it was fully booked?

Yes. Despite the fact that I registered at the CUS near the start of the year, lots of courses were already full. Like me other people were put on a waiting list and, in some cases, admitted to additional courses they opened later on.

Would you advise other students to take advantage of the CUS facilities? Why (not)?

Yes because you can combine three things at once: having fun, getting fit and paying low prices. Taking care of your body is actually a very good way of taking a study break in my view.



info@cusroma.net
www.cusroma.net
www.uniroma1.it/sport/default.php

NO PAIN, NO GAIN

The busy life of a working student

By Roberta Bianchi

According to ISTAT, the Italian Statistical Institute, the number of working students in Italy is growing year by year. The working student (or studying worker) belongs to a “species” that for various reasons has to/wants/needs to get a job in order to keep going in the jungle of society.

I am one of those people that wakes up at 6 am to clock in at 8 am, who reads books and studies while the underground goes from Termini to Laurentina Station. We are easily recognized as we sit on the train asleep with books on our laps or spend our lunch hour alone in the office with our beloved books.

I have been living this “double” life since 2008, trying to reconcile these two activities. At the beginning I was happy because I thought I would be able to manage them but as the months passed I gradually realized that no pain, no gain. Student life is hard enough; a working student’s life is harder.

Most of us have difficulty even to talk with someone in administration: you can try sending emails, or phoning, but no-one will answer your call. If you need material from the photocopy-shop, or if you need to hand in your study schedule, you must first request a day off work because in many cases work and study are incompatible. I’d say I’m lucky because the company I work for has given me the opportunity to complete my course of study but sometimes I feel so “guilty” about taking a day off work to do an exam that even when I feel terribly sick I still end up going to work instead of staying at home.

Sometimes I get disheartened and start thinking of giving up my studies, especially after a hard day

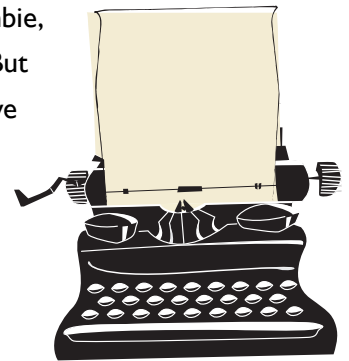
at work, when, like a zombie, all I want to do is sleep. But even if it is not easy to live this double life, all the gratification and satisfaction I feel when I pass an exam makes everything just that little bit easier. I confess it is no

simple matter to start studying at 9 pm, only to fall asleep at the table after a short while, but my energy comes back after a shower and a hot cup of coffee with ginseng.

If I could turn the clock back, I would probably go on and try to finish my studies before looking for a job, but now it is too late: what’s done cannot be undone. I just have to grit my teeth and not give up on what I am fighting for. Luckily, I found a job that enables me to pay for my tuition fees, and to buy a car by instalments, which means that I am no longer a financial burden on my parents.

My feeling is that if I were to quit University, I would probably miss out on something, and so I would feel incomplete: the postgraduate degree I’m doing is a completion of my journey, although it is a journey that will take me nowhere as far as my field of work is concerned.

This is why I suggest to all those who are working students like me not to give up studying only for the sake of a salary: when you study a subject you like, you cope with difficulties differently, and sometimes they can even be turned into pleasures.



THE GRADUATES

Two Modern Language students from La Sapienza write about their thesis experience



Salvatore on his graduation day in January 2010, at the Museo di Arte Antica, on the main campus.

Airspeak: The Evolution of Flight Communication

By Salvatore Zullo

I have been working for almost six years in the civil aviation industry, travelling all over Europe at the same time as studying for my degree in modern languages. My position in the airline industry is still that of flight attendant supervisor, which includes many safety and security responsibilities.

Naturally, my work responsibilities are related to the fact that I particularly enjoy learning about the subject of Safety and Emergency Procedures. In my spare time I have also watched a number of documentaries about air crash investigations. At one point, I saw a programme which showed computerised reconstructions of how some real air accidents had happened, and details of the investigations made by the aviation safety boards following the accidents.

This is what first gave me the idea of writing my dissertation on aspect of Aviation English, but my real inspiration came about when I discovered that some real air catastrophes were caused by oral miscommunication in English.

I was very pleased, therefore, that the English section at Lettere e Filosofia of this University was open to the idea of aviation language as a suitable topic for my thesis. One of my two supervisors had some experience in working with aviation language (both as a teacher of English to pilots and air traffic controllers, and as a translator of material related to aviation

accidents), and provided some initial help with my bibliography and thesis outline.

Only a part of my thesis sources revolved around books. I also made use of documentation produced by aviation authorities (for example, working regulations, reports and proposals), and of studies carried out in connection with language training for pilots and other aviation personnel. A certain amount of material was also available online, which was of great help in my circumstances.

My dissertation also included interviews with my pilot colleagues. These interviews at times confirmed the ideas I wanted to put forward in my thesis, or gave me new directions to follow, thus guiding me towards my conclusions concerning problems related to the use of English in aviation and also the technical aspects of doing this kind of empirical research.

Since I was working full-time and based in Dublin, it was of course difficult for me to come frequently to Rome for consultations with my supervisors. I did manage to come to Rome on several occasions, but most of the time I had to rely on email communication, also for revision of my work. However, thanks to my supervisors' help and support, I managed to stick to the research and writing calendar that we established near the start of my thesis project, and graduated within the planned timescale.



Translation and Analysis of a Docudrama on Tony Blair

By Roberta Saccucci



Roberta on her graduation day in December 2009, at Villa Mirafiori.

I graduated from La Sapienza in Lingue e Culture del Mondo Moderno in 2007. My undergraduate thesis was entitled *The Celtic Tiger and the Language of Economics*, but for my Specialist thesis, I decided to explore screen translation, a well-developed field in Italy, with a thesis entitled *The Deal: traduzione e analisi di un docudrama su Tony Blair*.

What is important when writing a thesis is your choice of topic, a choice that you won't be able to change if it turns out less appealing than you originally thought - unless you decide to postpone your graduation date.

As Kierkegaard said, choosing is unchangeable because you can't go back in time and change your mind. The same goes for your thesis, which should be an interesting experience. So make sure that the first thing you ask yourself is "Do I like this topic?" After this, you can start looking for materials.

One topic that appeals to language students is screen translation. Easy as it may seem, this topic is quite challenging because you need to deal with the link between images and language.

In my recent thesis experience for my Specialist degree in Translation (Traduzione letteraria e traduzione tecnico-scientifica, the former 509

curriculum), I worked on the script of Stephen Frear's film *The Deal* starring Michael Sheen, which had never been dubbed into Italian. The political aspect of the film may seem boring at first (it's about the political relationship between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, both running for the election), but what I found really interesting was the need to adapt the dialogue and word play. One of the difficulties in this translation project was related to the film genre, namely a political docudrama dealing with actual events.

Before starting work on the translation itself, I read a lot of books at the Biblioteca Nazionale (they weren't available at the Mirafiori library) to help clarify the main problem areas of screen translation (for example, Bollettieri Bosinelli, *Tradurre per il cinema*, 2002).

To find out about how dubbing is actually done, I also read *Tradurre per il doppiaggio* (Paolinelli, Di Fortunato, 2005). In this way, I had a clearer idea of what I was going to do. Then I analysed the script thoroughly, focusing on key areas for my translation analysis, such as word play, the characters' idiolects and accents, the lexicon, syntax, cultural references, and polite forms. For example, the existence of different accents (Scottish and English) proved to be so intriguing that I was asked to demonstrate them while presenting my thesis to the exam commission - what luck to have Scottish friends who had taught me how to do a Scottish accent!

At the start of my translation project, however, my ideas were very confused, at least until I actually got down to organizing my work. I divided my analysis into two parts: screen translation and adaptation.

In the first part, I focused on the problems linked to "how to translate a language into another culture", whereas in the second, I highlighted the difficulties related to lip-synchronization on the one hand, and expressive synchronization on the other.

To ensure lip-synch, I tried to adapt the Italian sentences to the movements of the actors' lips, if these are clearly visible in the shot. For expressive synchronization, I focused mainly on the ways in which the politicians' speeches were characterized by facial expressions and body movements. In this way, I was able to explain, with examples, exactly what expressive synch is.

My thesis supervisor helped me to overcome a number of obstacles, not by telling me what to do but by discussing possible solutions with me. Although my co-supervisor cut some of my work a few days before my presentation, I wasn't too worried, and took advantage of her advice to rewrite this part of my work. I was now ready for my thesis presentation.

On the day of my thesis discussion, I explained to the thesis committee how I had structured my work, and which problem areas I had focused on, without referring to translation theory, which was obviously already familiar to the commission. My only regret is that I didn't dub the scenes I took as examples by using a specific kind of software that replaces characters' voices with yours. Alternatively, I could have inserted subtitles simply by means of a .srt file (this is a file recording the extracted subtitles and the time code of a line as a text file). But our university facilities did not enable me to do this.

In spite of this, I can honestly say that I really enjoyed dealing with this captivating field of translation.

Now, of course, I'm looking for a job. I've sent my curriculum to many dubbing companies in Rome but only few have got in touch with me.

What I am mainly asked in interviews is about experience in adapter-mastering. The thing is, they're not looking for translators but for adapters. So you'd better to know all about how to

write a professional dubbed script because they won't waste their time trying to explain this to you.

One company has given me the opportunity to follow the dubbing in the dubbing

room so as to observe everything that might be helpful for me. I've seen documentary dubbing, the easiest thing to do at the beginning because you don't need to lip-synch, and I've noticed that an adaptation differs from a translation because of the time code of a line. In the script you are asked to indicate the time and you should try to make the Italian neither longer nor shorter than the original line, which is not always an easy thing to do.

Sometimes, when a line is too long the actor is not able to recite it, so s/he wastes time cutting it. This, obviously, is not good for a dubbing company that has little time to waste.

This is not a regular job but a rather odd and unprofitable one because you work when you are given a script, but if you want to translate I think this is an interesting way to start out in the translation field.



from *The Graduate* (1967)

In the opening scene, Ben (Dustin Hoffman) delivers a speech to his fellow students on graduation day:

...and today it is right that we should ask ourselves the one most important question: What is the purpose of these years, the purpose for all this demanding work, the purpose for the sacrifices made by those who love us? Were there NOT a purpose, then all of these past years of struggle, of fierce competition and of uncompromising ambition would be meaningless. But, of course, there is a purpose and I must tell it to you. I ask you to remember this purpose always and I pledge that I shall endeavor to carry it with me forever. The purpose, my fellow graduates - the purpose is - there is a reason, my friends, and the reason is - the reason is - the purpose is -

The Captain's voice interrupts Ben's speech, announcing that the plane is about to land.

Later, at the graduation party arranged by Ben's parents at their home:

LADY: What are you going to do now?

BEN: I was going to go upstairs for a minute -

LADY: No - I meant with your future... with your life

BEN: Well - that's a little hard to say



RADIO SAPIENZA AND FEELTHERADIO

the future starts here!

By Dario Fanara

RadioSapienza has re-charged its batteries, and is ready to **spring** into action!

From the programming schedule below you'll see that every weekday offers great listening, with your favourite presenters and VIP guests.

JobJobCinema: how to find work in the film world.










RadioMovie: all about today's must-see movies, and interviews with your movie idols.

Underground: new music genres revealed.

Questioni private: focus on gender issues.

SOS - Soundz of Suburbia: a solid dose of underground music and its budding musicians.

And very weekday lunchtime, **La Radio in Cucina** brings you recipes to whet your appetite even further.

time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
11.00-13.00	Wake Up Sapienza (Books)	Wake Up Sapienza (Technologies)	Wake Up Sapienza (Travel)	Wake Up Sapienza (Music)	Wake Up Sapienza (Films)
15.00	 RADIO SAPIENZA UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA	 RADIO SAPIENZA UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA	Radio Movie Dario	 RADIO SAPIENZA UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA	 RADIO SAPIENZA UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA
16.00	 RADIO SAPIENZA UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA	JobJobCinema Claudio + Valentina	 RADIO SAPIENZA UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA	 RADIO SAPIENZA UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA	Questioni private Valentina + Giulia
17.30	News	News	News	News	News
18.00	Ogni Maledetto Lunedì (Sports news) Graziano + Marco	 RADIO SAPIENZA UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA	 RADIO SAPIENZA UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA	Underground Valerio	SOS-Soundz of Suburbia Davide + Alessandro

FeelTheRadio

On air 17.30-18.30, Monday-Saturday

Monday	La politica Malgrado tutto Gabriella + Daniela
Tuesday	Sportivamente Parlando Graziano + Stefano
Wednesday	Metropolis Roberto + Isabella
Thursday	Il Canile Davide + Alessandro
Friday	PourParlè Claudio + Caterina
Saturday	Al Posto delle Fragole Alessandro + Chiara

Starting this month, **RadioSapienza** is aired also on FM radio. (100.5 in Rome and province), and streamed over the Internet on www.radiopowerstation.com. But note that these shows are nothing like national radio!

La politica malgrado tutto: discussion of politics.

Sportivamente parlando: basketball, volleyball, rugby, cycling, cars... anything but football, just for a change!

Metropolis: a journey through contemporary urban culture.

Il Canile: your hosts "sniff out" something quite different from MTV and RadioDeeJay.

PourParlè: lively, ironic, entertaining, and all about films, books, technology, events and comics.

Al Posto delle Fragole: cinema information, delivered with sparkle.

And If you miss something, you needn't worry: all the **FeelTheRadio** shows are aired again on www.radiosapienza.net.

Wait no longer! Tune in to **RadioSapienza** today:

THE FUTURE STARTS HERE!

JUST ANOTHER MARK ON THE WALL?

By Chiara Guida

“Some people become cops because they want to make the world a better place. Some people become vandals because they want to make the world a better-looking place.”

Banksy, *Existencilism* (2002)

Banksy is a British graffitist, allegedly born in 1974 near Bristol. He mixes the two techniques of graffiti writing and stencils. He says: **“I use whatever it takes. Sometimes that just means drawing a mustache on a girl's face on some billboard, sometimes it means sweating for days over an intricate drawing. Efficiency is the key”.**

His works are often satirical, and deal with war, capitalism and totalitarianism. Some also appear on Israel's Western Wall. His images of holes in the wall depict wonderful landscapes that can be interpreted as indicating hope for the future.



One of Banksy's graffiti on Israel's Western Wall



Banksy's urban requalification

Although he is probably the most famous British artist at the moment, he still succeeds in keeping his identity secret. On Banksy's website you will see this statement:

I am unable to comment on who may or may not be Banksy, but anyone described as being 'good at drawing' doesn't sound like Banksy to me.

Banksy has also written a number of books and has recently made a film entitled *Exit through the Gift Shop*, which premiered at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival.

With Banksy, street art is experiencing a new life. People who had previously looked upon graffitists as vandals have begun to change their minds.

To help us extend our understanding of the world of street art, I interviewed a painter and graffitist who lives and works in Naples, where graffitists have always been fairly active. His name is Drow.

Why should graffiti be considered Art?

I could say diplomatically: because they deliver messages or express concepts just like all figurative arts, arousing different feelings in each person. But the issue is obviously more complex than that. Only in recent years have people started to consider graffiti as an Art genre, while before they were just seen as works of vandals particularly skilled at using spray paint. I don't think it's possible to give an objective answer to this question simply because it can be misinterpreted, as with all forms of art. It is worthless to try to classify everything. Graffiti art is a well defined art movement with its own rules and hierarchies, a sort of "colour community", whose members probably have no intention to define themselves as artists, but only want to keep on doing what they've always done, whether beautiful or obscene.

Is becoming a graffiti artist an excuse to show individual ability or a way to express ideas and protest against something?

You can't generalize or create a standard. Everyone begins drawing graffiti for their own individual reasons. Some people want to communicate by using walls; others simply want to create something beautiful; others again just find this kind of art interesting and want to try something new.

There are different kinds of street artists. What can you tell us about them?

The "graffiti world" has changed in recent times, and is taking different directions, dividing itself into

subcategories. There are the stencilers, such as Banksy, the graffitists, the bombers and so on. The stencilers express clear messages, trying to shake people's consciences about the terrible conditions of the cities or places they live in. The graffitists mainly draw on "legal walls"; they need time and a lot of colours. They work with great care, aiming for perfection. This is what links them to the philosophy of Art. Probably the reason for their perfectionism is their conception of the wall as a canvass. The bombers prefer to draw mainly on trains or "illegal walls". They love the rush of adrenaline they feel when writing their name quickly wherever they can, in order to become known. They are often described as vandals, but I'd rather describe it as a different kind of creativity. The ones who really are to be considered vandals are those who write romantic phrases such as *io e te tre metri sopra il cielo* or those who post political propaganda. They really do spoil buildings.

Which was your first love, graffiti or Art?

Definitely the first. I was "swallowed up" by the world of graffiti when I was eleven. My love for Art came much later. Graffiti have a strong appeal when you live in a certain reality. We say *il muro porta rota* (the wall is addictive) and that's really true. Once you start drawing graffiti you can't quit. You can't help picking up and using a can of spray when you see one and have a blank panel available in front of you.



Drow, Teso, Dens, Bettie - Graffitists at work

How does the approach of painters to street art differ?

Painters are certainly more critical. Their point of view is completely different. Colour combinations, light, shadow and proportions are important to them. To be more precise, I'll try to explain two fundamental concepts. First of all: technique. A painter has constant contact with the canvas, and can feel its thickness and strength, noticing if it is dry or damp. Graffiti writers on the other hand, never touch the wall, but have to maintain a certain distance to shade the colours off as they want. The tools used are also completely different. Painters can use materials and instruments to change the consistency of the paint and the shape they are drawing. A graffitiist has various types of spray cans. Painters who want to enter the world of

street art must leave all their "classical art" convictions behind them and learn to use new materials. Secondly, Painters and graffitiists also have very different points of view regarding canons, such as highlighting. A painter's idea of highlighting is that it must be imperceptible, although present, whereas a graffitiist will tend to emphasize it. Graffiti writers can become painters and vice versa, but they must be aware that they are going to learn something completely new. It's also hard to use a brush on a wall and sometimes it doesn't turn out, while it's easier to use spray on canvas. In both cases, no matter how many brushes or spray cans you buy, you can be considered an artist only when you succeed in transforming an object into a work of art.

EXHIBITIONS

STEN&LEX

12 March - 30 April 2010

If you enjoyed reading this interview, you might also be interested in an exhibition which is on at the moment with the works of Sten and Lex, two Roman street artists. Sten and Lex also took part in a recent exhibition in London with Banksy, and share his passion for the poster technique. Further details from CO2 Contemporary Art Gallery, Borgo Vittorio, 9b - 00193, Rome. Tel. 06 45 47 12 09.



Sten and Lex's poster technique

FOR LOVERS OF THE CLASSICS

6 March - 29 June 2010

From Corot to Monet - The Symphony of Nature, at the Complesso Vittoriano, in Via San Pietro in Carcere. More than 170 works on display, organised in collaboration with the Art Institute of Chicago, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris, and the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg.

Monday to Thursday: 9.30-19.30

Friday and Saturday: 9.30-23.30

Sunday: 9.30-20.30



FILM REVIEWS



Alice in Wonderland, dir. Tim Burton (2010)

Reviewed by Martina Papaleo

Burton's Alice goes on a journey that is nothing like that of the little fair-haired girl in the 1951 movie version of Alice. Here Alice is a girl of marriageable age who continuously remembers imaginary talking animals, a smiling cat and a white rabbit in a hurry.

After Alice falls down the hole and ends up in Underland, we meet the Blue Caterpillar (Alan Rickman) with his pipe, who confuses her as much as ever, and Tweedledum and his twin brother Tweedledee (Matt Lucas). There is also the Red Queen (Helena Bonham Carter) with her oversized head, who fights a moral war against her sister, the White Queen (Anne Hathaway), and of course the inevitable card soldiers and painted roses to complement her evil kingdom.

But the magic is distorted by making the scene of the non-birthday tea, a mad meal presided over by the Mad Hatter (Johnny Depp), who behaves like he's stoned out of his head. There is also the special appearance of the March Hare (Paul

Invictus, dir. Clint Eastwood (2009)

Reviewed by Laura Ranieri

The title of this film, which means 'unconquerable', comes from a poem by British writer William Ernest Henley, based on a historical fact about Nelson Mandela, who was elected South Africa's first black President in 1995.

The film starts with Mandela's transition from imprisonment to the leadership of South Africa. His greatest challenge is to eliminate the tension and hatred between blacks and whites. In his opinion the best way to reunite the country is through forgiveness and reconciliation, and he believes that sport, in this case rugby, can help him in this battle.

One thing I really enjoyed about this film was the acting. Morgan Freeman seems born for this part. Most of Mat Damon's screen time as Francois

Whitehouse) who I found the wittiest of all: you will crack up over the way he says "soup-spoon!"

Tim Burton's genius stumbles when he takes an evil dragon from a Disney tale and has it killed by the female protagonist. From a happy innocent kid Alice shifts to a warrior heroine.

The Disney-Burton duo has worked again, even though the dark side of the director is missing here, much to the disappointment of his fans (I'm one of them). And, as many critics have pointed out, it wasn't really worth forking out on the 3-D version.

Even though the Italian dubbed version seems carefully done, if you see the original version (and your English is good enough!) you will probably appreciate Johnny Depp's witty dialogue more, and above all Lewis Carroll's wordplay.

Like all fairytales, *Alice in Wonderland* is of course a story with a moral. In this case, it is about the clash between between social conventions and madness, as played out so well by all the loony characters involved. What is their secret?

The best people are mad!

Pienaar is spent in training or on the field and if you didn't already know that he was a famous actor you would think that he was a real rugby player.

Prior to 1994, South Africa had only two official languages, English and Afrikaans, but now a number of African languages also have official status. In this film, the actors use a South African accent of English, which I found quite easy to follow although I had never heard it before. Similarly, although I know nothing about rugby, neither did the sport-specific terms pose any particular problems.

Even if like me you're not a rugby fan, you may learn something from this film, not only about South Africa's history and Nelson Mandel, but also about the idea that respect and forgiveness are the best way to fight against racial oppression and xenophobia.



FILM REVIEWS CONTINUED



Shutter Island, dir. Tim Burton (2010)

Reviewed by Miriam Reale

This is Martin Scorsese's latest film, a psychological thriller set in the 1950s, based on the book of the same title by Dennis Lehane (author also of *Mystic River*), and full of allusions to noir films of the 40s and 50s.

It tells the story of Teddy Daniels (Leonardo DiCaprio), a U.S. federal marshal, who is sent to an island (reminiscent of *Escape from Alcatraz*) which is home to a hospital for the criminally insane. With his new partner Chuck Aule (Mark Ruffalo), he searches for a patient who has vanished from her cell without a trace.

Teddy begins to suspect that the questionable Dr. Cawley (Ben Kingsley) subjects his patients to

dubious treatments. Teddy also has strange dreams about his wife Dolores (Michelle Williams), who died in a fire two years earlier.

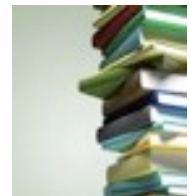
This film is full of terrifying and anxious moments, but it also has a deeper meaning concerning madness as means to survival. Light and shadow, evocative music and surreal flashbacks also play a prominent role in creating dramatic tension.

Leonardo DiCaprio and Ben Kingsley give great performances as expected, but Michelle Williams also struck me as a very good actor too.

According to some critics, this film is not one of Scorsese's best, but I would certainly recommend going to see it, especially if you enjoy films packed with twists and turns. I saw it both in the original version (at the Metropolitan) and in Italian, and what struck me most was the way that DiCaprio's real voice contributed to my enjoyment of the film.



BOOK REVIEWS



Mike Gayle, ***The Life and Soul of the Party***

Reviewed by Stefania Sorge

Six friends, and six parties to prove that they would remain friends forever. All packed with drama, friendship, love and tragedy. This compelling and moving novel concentrates on three couples, describing their lives as they go from one party to another.

Getting to know them is really easy because the novel is written in the first person from the point of view of each character. This may be a bit confusing at first, but after a few pages, it becomes an easy ride.

Gayle's conversational style adds real credibility to the story. My impression was that his way of talking to readers makes him seem like a close friend, someone you can confide in. He also seems adept at unveiling the mysteries of both men and women, and this makes the book both interesting and enjoyable to read.

At heart, the novel is about love and getting older, about the people in your life who may not share your blood but who you think of as family,

about those moments of insight when you realize how little time we all have and how much you might regret failing to take the opportunity to tell the people closest to you how much you love them. But mostly it's a story of parties, those special occasions when groups of friends get together to have a good time.

I suppose everybody has or at least once had a once-in-a-lifetime friend, someone you share everything with, who is always by your side and never, ever, abandons you. The reason I adore this book because it shows that with luck - and perhaps some commitment too - friendship *can* last forever.

Reading it might also prove helpful for people who are learning English. The themes dealt with are not at all obscure, but accessible to everyone. Importantly, it's not too difficult to understand the language either, although it is also quite challenging for young people who're trying to improve their knowledge of contemporary, colloquial and idiomatic English. Like the sound of it? You can find it easily in Rome's international bookstores.


BOOK REVIEWS CONTINUED


Emily Bronte, **Wuthering Heights**

Reviewed by Federica Pittori

Simply a great read, full of romanticism, suspense and revenge, tenderness, mystery and fear. It's not always easy to understand because of its complex structure: the main story is part of another story that frames it. There's an internal narrator, Mr Lockwood, who tells us this story as told to him by Nelly, the housekeeper of Thrushcross Grange and later of Wuthering Heights. The time of the story is different from the time of the narration: Catherine and Heathcliff's story is set about 20 years before Lockwood went to Wuthering Heights.

But as you read, everything gradually becomes clearer and you start hoping that Catherine doesn't die giving birth to her daughter (also named Catherine) fathered by Edgar, or that Heathcliff doesn't go away to seek his fortune, having heard part of Catherine's confession to Nelly, in which Catherine seemed to reject him, while what she actually said was that she was desperately in love with him...

At this point, you might feel a bit desperate and

I've no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven; and if the wicked man in there had not brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn't have thought of it. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now; so he shall never know how I love him: and that, not because he's handsome, Nelly, but because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same; and Linton's is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire. (Catherine)

disappointed, because if only he had heard a little more... but then you realize that if he had, this novel wouldn't have the beauty it has.

My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I am Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being. (Catherine).

In every cloud, in every tree—filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object by day—I am surrounded with her image! The most ordinary faces of men and women—my own features—mock me with a resemblance. The entire world is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her! (Heathcliff)

Everything in this work is surrounded by an obscure aura: when Wuthering Heights is the setting, you don't feel at peace, because the entire place is the material representation of Heathcliff's feelings. He has a storm within him, a mix of conflicting feelings he's unable to control because of his mysterious background. He was a poor boy brought from Liverpool by Catherine's father, and right from the start this new life wasn't very straightforward because of his problems with Catherine and her brother.

We find tranquillity in Thrushcross Grange, however, a place quite the opposite of Wuthering Heights: everything goes right, the house is always warm, the characters untormented by storms.

While reading the book, I felt the complex temperaments of those living in Wuthering Heights, and a flatness in those living in Thrushcross Grange. Both Edgar Linton and his nephew Linton (Heathcliff and Isabel Linton's son) are fragile people: they die in the middle of the novel. Certainly, the story has its most beautiful and mysterious and supernatural moments in Wuthering Heights.

It's not easy to explain the sensations that this timeless novel arouses. The only way to really understand what I mean is to read it yourself, to learn how in the end the two key figures, Catherine and Heathcliff, who had destroyed themselves trying to hold on to what they thought was their property, are finally free to love each other, and wander hand in hand...

THE DEVIL'S LOVER

By Aurora Mazzeni

Fiano Romano, 1528 A.D. Only a few weeks have passed since this living hell began, but it feels like eternity to me. My name's Bella Orsini and I've been accused of being a witch, a devil's lover. But the only one person I have ever loved is named Jacopo and he's anything but a devil. He's a mild-mannered peasant who lives not far from me. Thinking about him and the passionate intense hours we have spent together is the only thing that can soothe my pain. I know that I'm about to die. I know I'll never get out of this cell alive. This is why I'm writing these memoirs - with the stupid, unrealistic goal of leaving my mark in some small way, something to be remembered by...

Footsteps were approaching the cell where Bella was locked up. She quickly hid her diary. Two guards escorted her to a narrow, dirty room, determined to continue with their questioning.

"Well, well, well! Are you ready to confess to all of your evil deeds?"

"What should I confess? I will tell you once again, I'm innocent!" She shouted.

"Innocent.... Huh! You all are when you get caught! And then... you all confess!" One of the guards replied.

"We confess to crimes we have not committed in order to protect our loved ones... and to put an end to all the tortures you put us through!" she shouted. Not even after endless days of starvation and desperation had she lost her strength. There was fire in her eyes.

But not even those tears could move to pity a delegate of the Holy Inquisition. The man forced a sarcastic laugh but suddenly he became serious and grabbed hold of her face with his right hand.

"Aha, to protect your loved ones..."

Turning to his henchmen, he added,

"Wasn't it her beloved husband who reported her nocturnal escapades?" Turning back to Bella he spoke mockingly:

"Well it can hardly be him you're talking about. You're supposed to love Christ above all. And it's certainly not Him you're protecting now. We act in His Holy name, and if you don't confess to your sins, you will be acting in the name of Satan. And in front of me and these witnesses you're also admitting that you love that awful creature!"

His voice was nearing screaming pitch as he yelled into her face:

"You are hereby officially sentenced to death, in the name of God. May the Lord have mercy upon your soul, you impious, blasphemous witch!"

She had been declared a witch. It was over.

The two men started to beat her until she passed out. In those moments of unconsciousness, she could meet her lover again and find peace in his strong arms. And in that strange reality made up of dreams she went back in time to those nights when she waited for her husband to fall asleep then crept out through the window to meet her beloved. But that dimension of love vanished the

moment she woke up, and left her with so much sorrow that it rivalled the pain she felt for the men's blows beating down on her.

With what little strength she had left, she took the diary she had hidden under that makeshift bed the cell was furnished with and wrote:

I found out it was my husband himself who reported me to the authorities. He must have noticed my nocturnal absences. He might have followed us, so please, my love, flee somewhere safe.

Night fell and the moonlight wasn't bright enough for her to keep on writing. Exhausted, she lay down on the bed, trying to get some rest. During the night a huge din woke her up. The guards were bringing another woman to one of the prison cells; she could tell by the insults they were yelling at her. The next morning, Bella was woken up by harrowing screams. This time it wasn't her who was being interrogated and tortured but another woman.

She couldn't bear all the pain and sorrow of it. She started to fill with anger. Like all the other



witches, she was sentenced to being burnt at the stake, with her execution to be carried out the following day. Without even a last goodbye to her beloved Jacopo, she was taken to her cell again to await execution. Her Capital Punishment.

Punishment. A good word for someone who had done no wrong. Bella started writing without even realizing what she was doing, and at the same time found herself deep in introspection.

She had always known she was different from the other women: unconventional, full of life, independent, a rebel. Beyond society's image of women as sweet and submissive. Meaningless women. She was terrified by the role that history had given her. She wanted to mean. This was why, although she had married the man her father had chosen for her, the moment her eyes crossed Jacopo's, she had been unable to resist him.

At that moment, Love was calling me. And I made a choice. I choose to answer that irresistible call. I chose to be myself. I realized that otherwise I would die without having lived. And so, I chose life. Despite all this pain, despite persecution, I'd still make the same choice. I have gained something that not even death can erase. My only hope is that in the future, women will be able to decide their lives and have the freedom to be themselves. In this way, my sacrifice will not have been in vain. It will have meant something.

She placed her diary inside a chink in the wall, then took a nail she found on the floor and stuck it into her throat. The following day, when the guards came to take her, they found her already dead in a pool of blood.



FORGET OR FORGIVE

by Stella Bardani



James wasn't sure if it was a good omen or if it meant disaster, but he knew that something had changed. He couldn't remember a thing, but he had a strange sensation: he was feeling good, almost happy, although the last few weeks had been very painful for him.

That morning when he woke up there was no shadow of sadness in his eyes. He realized immediately that he had slept for almost two days. Everything seemed different, new. As if someone had taken his demons away.

He got up, a little stunned by this new and rather pleasant sensation, and went to the bathroom, where he found two toothbrushes.

"What's this?" he wondered. He had lived alone since he was twenty.

He dismissed the thought, until he realized that the whole bathroom was full of feminine objects: perfume, lipstick, vanilla bubble bath, black eyeshadow.... James rushed to the wardrobe and discovered that it had been invaded too! The worst moment came when he found a box full of pictures.

In every one of them, the person portrayed with him had been cut out.

He threw himself onto the bed and lit a cigarette. A few tears ran down his cheeks. One cigarette became an entire packet, smoked with anger, and disappointment for himself. Only a long time later would he realize that this was one of the worst days in his whole life.

"Who do these things belong to? Who was the missing person in the pictures?"

He began wondering, but he couldn't answer his question, because he couldn't remember a thing. For a couple of days, he continued trying to remember, but in vain. Until he arrived at a turning-point. It was a cold, rainy day; he didn't have great expectations, but suddenly the telephone rang and James answered: "Hello?"

"James, darling, how are you?"

"Mum?"

"Yes, I know. It's been a long time."

"My fault. What about you?"

"I'm so busy, you know, and so tired."

"I know."

"Tell me about yourself. Are you still living together with that eccentric girl?"

"What girl? I've never lived with any girl!"

"And I am Queen Elizabeth!"

"I'm not kidding."

"I definitely should know, you are still my child after all!"

"I don't know who you're talking about."

"James, dear, are you sure you're ok? Why don't you call a doctor?"

"I'm fine mum. Just confused!"

"As always!"

"Look, mum, I really have to go now, I'll phone soon, I promise."

"Well, look after yourself, and phone me! And don't forget to see your doctor, please! Do it for your mum's sake!"

James thought his mother might be right, so he started looking for his doctor's phone number. While flipping through his phone-book, his attention was captured by a weird name: *Forget or Forgive*. He decided to give them a ring.

"Good morning, this is Forget or Forgive, and I'm Violet. How can I help you?"

"Good morning I'm James Winterson and..."

"Oh Mr Winterson, we have been waiting for you to get in touch!"

"So you know me already?"

"Yes, you underwent therapy with one of our best doctors."

"Well, I'd like to meet this great doctor as soon as possible."

"I can put you down for ten o'clock tomorrow morning." Is that all right for you?"

"Yes, that's fine. Can you give me the address?"

"Oh my apologies, I always forget that you are unable to remember things. 23 Maple Street."

"Thank you."

James hung up, feeling a bitter taste in his mouth. Deciding he could do with a drink to get rid of it, he poured himself a large whisky. Then another one, and another... till he was completely drunk. By the time of his appointment the next day, however, he had sobered up.

"Welcome back, Mr Winterson. You won't remember me but I'm Doctor Melville, I helped you and your girlfriend to forget each other."

"What? I've got no idea what you're talking about!"

"I know, that's because our therapy was successful!"

"Can you tell me the whole story in detail, please?"

"Certainly, that's what I'm here for. It is the final part of the therapy. You came here because your relationship with your partner had broken down, and was clearly coming to an end. The breaking-up process was unbearable for you, so you decided you wanted to speed it up. How are you feeling now?"

"I feel gutted - right now I can barely breathe."

"But you will be fine again soon! Now, go home and take these pills three times a day for a week. You'll forget this conversation too."

"I'm speechless."

"You can't go back now, you can only go forward."

"I see."

"You have to throw away all the things that belong to her: every picture, every object, everything you shared with her."



Detail from a *Forget or Forgive* poster, 2010

"Fine."

"Goodbye Mr Winterson, I hope we don't ever see each other again!"

"Goodbye Doctor Melville".

In the meanwhile, in the next room, Audrey Spark was facing the same problem.

James came out of Dr Melville's surgery and headed towards the lift. While he was waiting, a girl arrived.

He looked at her and thought that she was bloody beautiful. She smiled to him very sweetly.

The lift door suddenly opened wide, and they couldn't stop staring at each other.

"Hi, I'm James". And she replied: "Audrey."

"I'm here to forget somebody, but I don't know who!"

"Oh, me too".

"Fancy a coffee?"

"That would be nice."

Nobody knows whether there will be a happy ending or not, but one thing's sure: they will never know that they have already been lovers. They only needed some help. Today, *Forget or Forgive* is a world-famous agency for couple-counselling.

They believe in the strength of true love.

HERBAL HEALING

By Samantha Rizzi

At this time of year, plants spring to mind. A time of healing and renewal. In ancient times, the wise women realized how useful nature could be for health. More recently, a kind of green revolution seems to have taken place, with increasing respect for, and trust in, nature.

Trusting nature means appreciating the beneficial properties of plants. Many people say

they even feel better simply by breathing in the mix of herbal scents and spicy aromas they find upon entering a herb shop.

In these aromatic oases, you can find a wide range of natural treatments for common health problems. Below are just some examples.



Lemon balm to keep you calm



Thyme to soothe the throat



Blueberry to improve your circulation



Comfort food: sweets with ginseng, propolis and barley

An Interactive Tale

Episode 4: 'The Note'

By Aurora Mazzoni and Cinzia Bianco

Need to talk. Meet
me at the
rollercoaster - in
one hour.

Marianne

After consulting one another over Marianne's note, the two decided to go. On their way there, older Sam showed the younger one the things he had found in Marianne's box, thinking that his younger self's memories would be fresher than his own and perhaps able to bring up something that he had long forgotten. They agreed on staying separate so that if one of them found himself in trouble, the other could help out, and if the worst came to the worst, call the police.

Once they got there, 1940-Sam stood waiting in front of the rollercoaster while 1950-Sam stood next to the candyfloss cart, thinking these positions were good for maintaining eye contact.

There were so many people swarming around that 1940-Sam could barely see Marianne coming towards him. As she approached, she appeared unperturbed, but her words betrayed her intentions.

"I heard you made a new friend" she started, making him rather worried. "I came here thinking this would be the last time we'd see each other", she went on, "but now... well, I suppose I was wrong!"

"What are you talking about?" he inquired.

"Follow me!" she commanded, "This is not a request", she added, showing a gun hidden underneath her coat.

1940-Sam glanced back at his fellow mis-adventurer and saw two men in black go up and drag him away.

The candyfloss man was staring intently at what was going on around him and, as soon as everybody was far enough away not to see what he was up to, he closed up his cart, got into a small van and picked up a tiny computer. A blue light moved across the map that appeared on-screen.

"We've got them", he whispered into his receiver.

On the way to the lab, the men in black injected their two prisoners with morphine. Upon regaining consciousness, the pair found themselves caged up inside a white-walled jail, not knowing how they'd got there.

From their jail window, they could see a huge white lab with a number of odd-looking blond-haired blue-eyed people engaged in various activities. They looked as though they might be siblings, was their shared thought.

From their distant cell, the two Sams could barely hear what these Nordic-looking people were saying:

"What about the two policemen?"

"Marianne took care of them!"

Sam spotted a curious object in the middle of the lab; it had no water jets, only static water, but the shape resembled that of a fountain and there was certainly something odd about it.

But what really grabbed his attention was the large Coral logo, as on the small bottle he had found at Marianne's house.

Everything started to make sense.

Marianne had killed the two policemen, she was a Coral and this was their lab.

The other Corals, the ones in the lab, went on talking:

"In the simulation the lead works! The terrain is getting heavier."

"Great! Success is on the way! This time only God can save the Queen!"

Meanwhile, outside the lab the candyfloss man was talking into his receiver:

"Agent A015 here. I've shadowed them, the lab is underground, and the blue lights have been off for one hour... They appear to have been taken prisoner. I'm about to make entry and set them free."

He took the plan of the ventilation system and after studying it closely he got in. Night fell. Everything was silent. Suddenly he saw the movement detector: several red laser lines were blocking his way to the alarm box, so he had to make his way through the laser lines, moving with great care. When he reached the box, he deactivated it with spray foam. All he had to do now was get to the cell.

The two Sams were thinking about how to escape when they saw a man running towards them. In a matter of seconds the lock was opened. He had used some kind of tool, a sort of laser knife to pry it open.

"Don't think you are free! I need you for information about this damn lab!" said the agent.

Although they had to get out of there in a hurry, 1950-Sam turned to look once again at the fountain. He just felt he had to try. He took the bottle and tried to pour few drops of the liquid into the static water. Suddenly an image appeared on the static water: it was like a laptop monitor with two large icons. Written on them were the words **World Wide** and **Atlantis Corals**.

To be continued...

READY FOR TAKE-OFF

by Alice Gasbarra

My graduation present from my parents was a trip to Miami, Florida - an unforgettable experience!

Miami to me meant beach, sun, fun, culture and art, walking everywhere, sitting outside under palm trees watching passers-by, a place buzzing with energy all day long. When I saw it, it seemed like an outdoor museum of colour and history.

What I didn't expect was the smell - not a bad smell, just different from those familiar to me. I couldn't say if it's better or worse than here, but in Miami everything smells a bit like Mc Donalds! What we see here on TV about the US lifestyle and obesity also seems quite true: I have now seen these things with my own eyes.

But let me start from the beginning. As soon as my plane landed at Miami International Airport, I got into an embarrassing situation. I do speak English, maybe not very well, not like a native speaker that's for sure, but I try to understand and make myself understood. But here it was almost impossible. In a few minutes all of my self-confidence and poise fell apart. I started to feel stupid and embarrassed, I was no longer able even to carry on a simple conversation. *This isn't English*, I thought to myself, *but some strange kind of US slang*. I really felt like a fish out of water, but tried not to panic!

Everywhere I went I heard the so-called *Miami accent*, which is quite different from standard American and is strongly influenced by Spanish, a language spoken by about two thirds of the people living in Miami.

Miami is divided into Miami

Downtown and Miami Beach. My favourite area is the beautiful South Beach (known as SoBe), where my hotel was. On Ocean Drive, I saw people acting oddly, scantily-dressed people, people on roller blades, and the occasional homeless person too.

Visiting Downtown Miami was also enjoyable, and a familiar sight because of scenes remembered from *Miami Vice*, *The Bodyguard*, and *Scarface*. Surrounded by all those skyscrapers, I felt like an actress on a movie set.

This is a definitely a place I'd go again!



A view of Miami's skyscrapers (photo by Alice Gasbarra)



At the Southernmost point of Continental USA



HOROSCOPES FOR SPRINGTIME

By Chiara Pietropaolo

ARIES: You have a dreamy moon at your side for the whole month. Good feeling with your partner, and even though Valentine's Day has passed, romantic surprises are not over. Be careful! You may come across a few obstacles during an important lesson... Don't be impulsive!

TAURUS: Don't be obsessed by rules. They are made to be ignored! No one is perfect, and don't be afraid to make a mistake. But remember, you can't always be late getting to Uni - sometimes you have to stick to the timetable!

GEMINI: We know you always like to be sincere, but a little bit of diplomacy this time would be better: be careful, you might hurt someone's feelings, or end up arguing with a teacher, and believe me, this is not a good time to get a teacher angry!

CANCER: Love and romance are the only things you can think about at the moment, so spend some time with your partner of the month! Go out and have fun, whatever, but remember that you've got things to do at Uni too! Your classmates might miss you!

LEO: An unexpected break is going to bring you a lot of news and a pleasant surprise too. But you'll have to work hard this month: the winter has almost come to an end, but not for you. It's the right time to show the world who you are, so surprise your teacher with an extra assignment to show her/him you've woken up!

VIRGO: You are full of secrets, and this month will not be so relaxing, but don't forget about the wonderful people all around you: maybe it's the time to show your wild side. It's time to be brave at work too: just go for something you'd never normally do, and you'll be well rewarded.

LIBRA: It's the month for sports: the days are going to be sunny and warm, flowers are blooming and there are new buds on the horizon... not only in Nature! If I were you, I'd spend more time beneath that special oak tree at Villa...

SCORPIO: You want to buy a precious and expensive item that really makes you happy: this month Saturn is giving you a hand. It's time to make a little dream come true! On the other hand, things at uni aren't going so well these days, so maybe it's better to attend lessons and make a start on those assignments.

SAGITTARIUS: This will not be a lazy month. Forget about pottering or lounging around in your pyjamas all day long. Get your gear on and get out, with friends or alone. The uni café could be THE key place in the weeks to come. Go, take a novel with you, have a coffee with a teacher, whatever you want, but that's the place to be!

CAPRICORN: Love is knocking at your door: be ready to say "Welcome!" S/he will knock just once, so make the most of it while you can and use your hip and cool ways to bowl her/him over! Maybe you will have more frequent and meaningful sightings of the object of your desire in class!

AQUARIUS: Instead of rejecting advice that might be of some help to you, try to be a little less full of yourself. You need to relax: book a holiday abroad. Paris in the springtime is wonderful. Try not to think of all the lessons you'll miss: you only live once!

PISCES: You have always been a daydream believer, but you know, actual life might be better than a daydream. So stay tuned into reality and stop the dreaming for a while. You'll find magic by going to lessons and taking a break during your group study afternoons.

WALL

Capital punishment

In her article on capital punishment, (MiraMag 2, November 2009), Alessia Bianco points out that “our duty is simply to sentence criminals for the sake of justice but we should not deprive them of their lives because life is an inalienable right”. I totally agree, but would add that those who allow the execution of a murderer become murderers too.

A better solution for crimes like murder, rape and child abuse would be life imprisonment with forced labour. This way, people who have committed serious crimes might at least think about what they’ve done.

Some people say that violent criminals will never regret their deeds, that life imprisonment isn’t enough, and that our system of justice is unreliable. These objections may be partly founded, but it doesn’t follow that we have the right to decide if a person deserves to live or die. If current legal systems don’t work properly, governments should improve them.

Martina Puglisi

This magazine is a splendid idea, and excellently produced.
D. MONTINI

A good idea. Who should my students contact to send articles?
N. TOLL

I read the 2nd issue... and liked it.
A. GEBBIA

I'm so pleased with this initiative.
I. IMPERIALI

Most of the contributors are my ex-students... I'm so proud of them!
A.R. GERARDI

Really wonderful!
I. RANZATO



images of Banksy's work

THE BACK PAGE

MIRAMAG 4, MARCH 2010

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Don't send your masterpiece at the last minute - it won't get to our layout helpers in time!

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Image of Banksy's street art