

BOOKMARK



A Junior College Library Newsletter



DECEMBER/JANUARY - ISSUE 14 - 2017/18

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

We present to you our festive issue, and our biggest one yet!

2017 was an exciting year and we are looking forward to 2018. Setting up some goals for the coming new year makes it more exciting. Are you planning to try out something new? It doesn't have to be something big, even allocating some more well deserved me-time is something important. This can include starting out a new sport, or maybe yoga. You can also try out a new hobby - letting out your creative side is scientifically proven to be good way to flex your creative muscles and more importantly, it is a very good way to relieve stress!

Setting up a reading challenge is also a great way to discover new authors and new genres which you wouldn't normally choose! Be adventures in your book choices, and you won't be disappointed! A quick Pinterest search will give you loads of ideas on how to start a reading challenge! And where better to start your challenge than at the Library; our Fiction section is a great place to start!

In this issue of BOOKMARK, there are a couple of new features for you to enjoy, including a fascinating article written by one of you! We also have started a Poet's corner where we shall be featuring original poems. Together with an array of interesting articles which we are sure you will enjoy!



On behalf of the JC Library Team we would like to wish you a

*Wonderful Festive Season
&
Prosperous New Year*

JC Library Opening Hours :

Monday to Friday 8am to 4pm

Contact us : juniorcollege.lib@um.edu.mt

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Christmas Recess : Wednesday 20th December 2017 to Wednesday 3rd January 2018





Christmas Greetings :

a brief look at the beginnings of the Christmas Card

The Christmas period is all made up of traditions, some very ancient others relatively new. Christmas is a time to spread cheer and goodwill. Nowadays with social media this couldn't be easier but it seems that the tradition of giving and receiving Christmas cards is still strong.

Coincidentally, New Year Greeting cards date to the middle of the 19th century. Sources point to Scotland, where Thomas Shorrocks produced cards with the caption "A Gude Year to Ye."

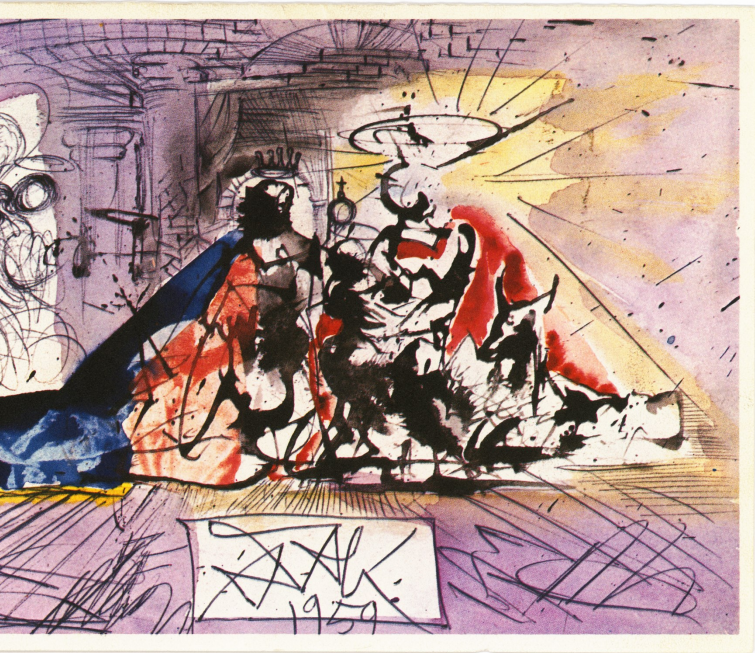
The Christmas card is more commonly credited to Sir Henry Cole, who later became the director of the Victoria and Albert Museum. During Christmas 1843, Sir Henry was anxious to reply to an increasing amount of correspondence. In Victorian England, not answering your post was considered as impolite and Sir Henry was at a loss of what to do.

A solution came to mind, and Cole approached artist J.C. Horsley to design his idea. Horsley's illustration was in the shape of a triptych showing a family group at a table celebrating the holiday. This was flanked by other images of people helping the poor with the message "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You". Cole ordered a thousand copies at a London printer on a piece of cardboard measuring 5 1/8 x 3 1/4 inches. And thus, the first Christmas card was created.

Acquaintances in Cole's circle and other prominent Victorians, soon copied Cole's idea and were sending out Christmas Cards.

In America, the first Christmas card is credited to a Prussian immigrant Louis Prang. In 1875 in his Boston shop, a card with a painting of a flower and with a simple message of "Merry Christmas" was produced.

The idea of Christmas cards, even though popular in prominent circles, took up in the 1880s to become an integral part of family traditions – part in thanks to the industrialisation of the printing press. In America, by the late 1920s, the holiday card industry employed more than 5,000 workers at as much as 40 factories. The design being a closely guarded secret from competition.



We owe the design of the modern day Christmas card to Joyce Hall, and later his brothers Rollie and William. The Hall brothers started their postcard printing company in 1915. A decade later, their company became known as Hallmark and they improved the format for their cards to 4x6 inches, folded once and inserted in an envelope.

Between the 1930s and 1950s, colourful Christmas cards with Santas and nativity scenes were very popular amongst consumers. Commissioning famous artists to design the cards was a way to beat the competition. In fact, Hallmark commissioned artworks by none other than Salvador Dali and Norman Rockwell.

However, their most popular design is a very simple one of three cherubic angels, one of which is peeking at you and with her halo slightly crooked. This design was published in 1977 and has sold more than 34 million copies.

Even though the age of the greeting card seems to be past it's golden years, many still choose to send a card to their loved ones during the holiday season. This tradition is being kept alive not only through the giants such as Hallmark, but also through independent and smaller publishers. The card becoming an extension of one's personality or beliefs.



References :

- <https://daily.jstor.org/history-christmas-card-holiday-card/>
- <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/history-christmas-card-180957487/>



L-Awent u l-Girlanda

L-Awent huwa żmien ta' stennija, għat-twelid ta' Ġesù Bambin fil-qalb ta' kull wieħed u waħda minna.

B'dan l-artiklu xtaqt nagħti tagħrif ġenerali fuq il-girlanda u fuq kull xemgħa, il-**kulur**, is-**sinifikat** u l-**messaġġ** li hemm wara dan kollu. B'hekk nagħmlu din il-mixja ta' preparazzjoni flimkien għall-ġranet tal-Milied, fejn sa niċcelebraw it-twelid ta' Ġesù, li ried isir f'kollox bħalna minbarra d-dnub, u dan għamlu sabiex Fih (f'Ġesù) naraw l-imħabba kbira li għandu Alla l-Missier lejn l-umanità.

Matul dan iż-żmien ta' stennija hemm l-użanza li tintrama girlanda li jkun fiha erba' jew ħames xemgħat b'kuluri differenti. Kull xemgħa għandha s-sinifikat tagħha, u filwaqt li l-ewwel erbgħa jindikaw l-erba' ġimgħat tal-awent, il-ħames waħda tindika l-miġja tas-Salvatur tagħna Sidna Ġesù Kristu. L-istess girlanda għandha tifsira. Hija tonda, u din tindika l-għaqda, tindika l-imħabba tassew li hija bla bidu u bla tmiem. Il-kulur tagħha huwa aħdar, li jindika ħajja u tama.

L-ewwel xemgħa hija ta' lewn **vjola** u tirrappreżenta l-**profeti**. Kif insibu fit-Testment il-Qadim, huma ħabbru l-miġja ta' Ġesù bħala l-Messija, dak li ser isalvana u jħabbibna mill-ġdid mal-Missier. Fid-dawl ta' dan il-qari bibliku kollu li jsir fil-quddiesa jgħinna nifhmu l-messaġġ tal-profeti - li kien messaġġ mimli **tama** fil-miġja tal-Messija. Dan lilna jimpenjana sabiex din it-tama tidher f'ħajjitna, tinħass kull fejn inkunu ma' dawk madwarna, u aħna msejħin biex inwassluha għand persuni oħra li jkunu ftit imbegħdin minn Ġesù, anke jekk fil-verità huma nies ta' rieda tajba.

It-tieni xemgħa hija ta' lewn **vjola** wkoll u tirrappreżenta il-post **Betlehem** fejn twieled Ġesù. Din il-ġimgħa l-qari kollu jgħinna naħsbu kemm aħna persuna ta' **fidi** u ta' fiducja sħiħa f'Alla. Dan nagħmluh billi nippreparaw irwieħna u nirriflettu fuq ħajjitna: fuq il-ħsieb, il-kliem, l-għemil, it-twettiq tad-dmirijiet u l-istil ta' ħajja li qed ngħixu.

It-tielet xemgħa hija ta' lewn **roża** u tirrappreżenta r-**rgħajja** li marru jfittxu lil din it-tarbija hekk kif semgħu bl-aħbar tat-twelid ta' Ġesù. Għalhekk huwa messagġ ta' **ferħ** fejn ir-rgħajja ferħu b'dak li qalulhom, ferħu b'dak li sabu u ferħu bl-esperjenza tal-laqqgħa tagħhom ma' Ġesù tarbija. Hawnhekk forsi tajjeb li wieħed jirrifletti dwar: kemm aħna qed infittxu lil Ġesù fil-ħajja tagħna. Infittxu biss meta jkollu bżonnu? Il-ferħ tiegħi minn fejn hu ġej? Ferħ ġej minn Ġesù li hu għal dejjem, jew minn oġġetti li jintemmu maż-żmien?

Ir-raba' xemgħa hija ta' lewn **vjola** u tirrappreżenta l-**angli** li jwasslu il-messagġ ta' **paċi** li ġab Ġesù u li jixtieq li lkoll kemm aħna naħdmu għalih, ngħixuh fina u nwassluh lil ħaddieħor. Paċi li tant għandna bżonn bejnietna fuq diversi livelli fis-socjetà tagħna, fid-dinja ta' madwarna. Paċi fil-qalb tagħna, paċi billi nħallu lil ħaddieħor jgħix fil-paċi tiegħu/tagħha. Li naħdmu flimkien għall-paċi bejnietna u fuq kollox, li inkunu aħna stess fil-paċi ma' Alla. B'hekk biss il-preparazzjoni tagħna għall-Milied tkun sħiħa u kif mixtieq.

Il-ħames xemgħa hija ta' lewn **abjad** u tirrappreżenta lil Sidna **Ġesù** Kristu, li tweled bniedem bħalna biex iħabbibna mal-Missier u joffrilna s-**salvazzjoni**. Kemm ikun xieraq li niċcelebraw it-twelid ta' Ġesù f'paċi u f'għaqda bejnietna. Ejjew mhux biss inzejnu u narmaw il-girlanda, imma nifhmu u ngħixu s-sinifikat taż-żmien tal-avvent. Żmien ta' stennija attiva u mhux passiva, fejn aħna lkoll mistiedna naraw x'nistgħu nbiddu jew intejbu fil-ħajja tagħna.

Minn qalbi nixtiqilkom il-koll il-Milied it-tajjeb lilkom u lill-familjari kollha tagħkom.

Sliem u barka

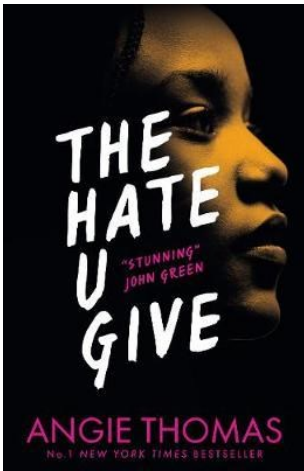
Fr Marco Portelli

Chaplain JC





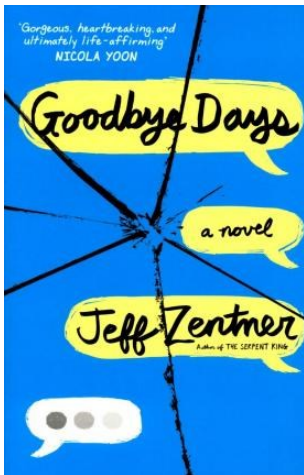
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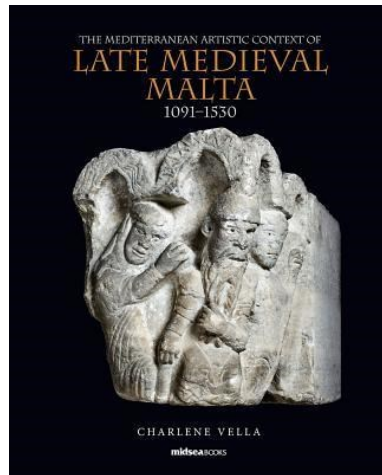
The Hate U Give
By
Angie Thomas



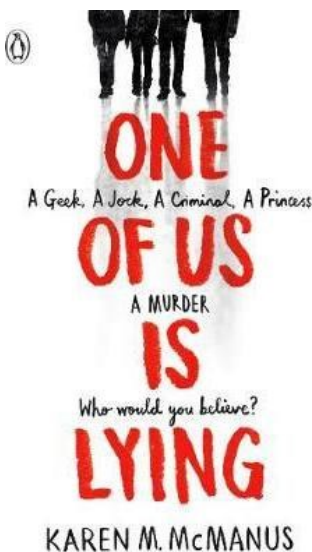
The Ultimate Game of
Thrones and Philoso-
phy : You Think or Die
Edited by
Eric J. Silverman and
Robert Arp



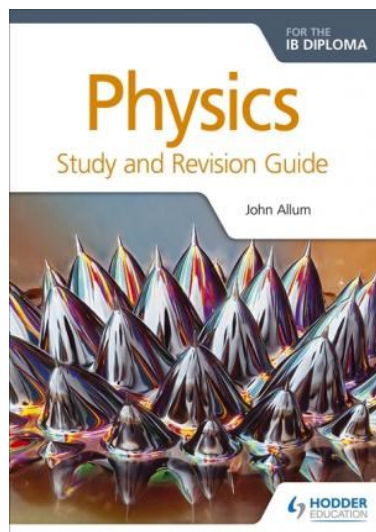
Goodbye days
By
Jeff Zentner



Late Medieval Malta :
1091-1530
By
Charlene Vella



One of Us is Lying
By
Karen M. McManus



Physics : Study
and Revision
Guide
By
John Allum



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print and online resources



ON THE JOB

PRIMARY TEACHER

In this instalment of ON THE JOB we interview Katya Mercieca about her role as a Primary Teacher

How did you become a teacher

It was not planned at all. At seventeen I was planning to pursue a career in law, but after I finished my A levels I decided to take a break and I did not apply for university immediately. I needed something to finance my break and while I was working in a catering outlet part-time I was asked if I wanted to apply for a job as an LSA in a kindergarten school.

My mum worked at The Eden Foundation at the time so I was no stranger to this ambience. Fast forward six years and I was still working as an LSA, until one morning it dawned upon me that I wanted more responsibility and I enrolled at university and followed a BEd in early childhood and care. Fast forward another five years and here I am in my second teaching year.

What do you actually do?

This is a tricky one. I consider myself to be a part time mum, a nurse, a counselor, a bearer of secrets, a mediator, a referee, a motivator, a friend, a role model, and an oracle.

There is much more to teaching than just following the syllabus and teaching literacy and numeracy. Each child comes to school with problems and experiences and they need someone to hear them out, to guide them a bit and to just be there for them.

Why do you think your job is important?

This is an easy one. My job is not important, it is crucial; we are all what we are because people from our past believed in us, guided us and helped us grow. I only teach early years, so I believe that together with parents I play an essential role in the formation of the little ones entrusted to me. And I am not just talking about academic stuff, I am talking about character formation, values and beliefs. A teacher can make or break a child.

What did you study to become a teacher?

I followed a BEd in Early Year's Education and Care. My studies did not stop there though, I study the children's expression on a daily basis and act accordingly.

What is your favourite book?

George Orwell's Animal Farm. I will not comment any further, just go read it.



PLAGIARISM

Keep Your Work Honest

What is Plagiarism?

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, plagiarism is "the action or practice of taking someone else's work, idea, etc. and passing it off as one's own."



Let's face it...

There is no shortage of information available on the internet. With today's technology, it is super easy to find, share, and use information. It is also just as easy to plagiarize. Therefore, it is important to keep your academic work honest and make sure to give credit when credit is due.

Ways to Plagiarize

There are many different ways to plagiarize and it isn't just copying someone's work word for word. Many cases are often ambiguous. Plagiarism can be inaccurate or missing citations, mixing copied and/or paraphrased material from multiple sources, and poor paraphrasing.

Don't Forget!

Text is not the only thing that can be plagiarized. Pictures, charts, graphs, video, music, etc. should be cited.



Ways to Avoid Plagiarism



Cite Your Sources

Be sure to cite your sources whenever you quote, paraphrase, or summarize.



Don't Procrastinate

When you are in a rush, it is easy to become careless and make poor choices.



Be careful when Cutting & Pasting

Copying and pasting is a breeze with today's technology. Make sure to always cite your sources.



Maltese Naming Practices

Dr Mario Cassar

The onomastic pool of a population informs on the cultural characteristics of that group, on its internal structure, on its degree of isolation or aperture, on the relations with other populations, on migratory exchanges, and on the reconstruction of its history and its evolution. Maltese onomastics, personal names included, is polystratal and polyglot, because names have reached the island over many centuries in complicated historical and linguistic conditions, and because Malta has always been a place for coexistence of various ethnic groups and their respective languages. Since the end of the Arab-Muslim period and the complete re-Christianization of the island, the two major strata on the Maltese anthroponymic map have been overwhelmingly Romance (Italian, Sicilian, Spanish and French) and British.

For whole centuries, and up till very recently, two main strands in the origin of Maltese given names could be singled out: kinship naming traditions and religious traditions. Many new-borns were conferred names recalling those of deceased grandparents or close relatives. Such names were merely bestowed as tokens of honour, respect and cherished memories. Parents, perhaps, honestly harboured hopes that their offspring would inherit in some way or another the desirable and virtuous qualities of their ancestors. In this manner the essential identity and characteristic roots of a particular family were deemed to persevere across generations.

It is obvious that the most powerful religious influence on naming in Europe, including Malta, has been the Christian Church. In Catholic countries, since the Middle Ages, the calendar of the saints was a popular repertoire from which names were chosen. Hence *Giovanni*, *Michele* and *Stefano* used to be apt names for children born on 24 June, 29

September and 26 December respectively. Needless to say, patron saints were always celebrated by the bestowing of their names on new-borns. Consequently, in Malta, the profusion of *Nicholas/Nikol* at Siġġiewi, *Andrew/Andrea* at Luqa, *Lawrence/Lorenzo* at Vittoriosa, *Helen* at Birkirkara, *Catherine/Catarina* at Żejtun and Żurrieq, just to mention a few examples, is quite understandable. For a long time, it was practically possible for a significant number of individuals in Malta to be identified as residents of a definite town or village. Moreover, traditionally, an individual had the name of the patron saint of the town of village included in his/her list of names.¹ Up till roughly the mid-20th century there was hardly a household in Malta that did not have names derived from forms of *John (Giovanni)*, *Peter (Pietro)*, *Paul (Paolo)*, and other saints, apostles, and martyrs.²

Since the Late Middle Ages, Maltese given names were overwhelmingly drawn from the Italian/Sicilian onomastic pool due to the long-standing political, economic, cultural and religious affinities between these peoples, not to mention the obvious geographical proximity.³ A short list would suffice to illustrate the point: *Vincenzo/Censu*, *Gaetano/Gejtu*, *Paolo/Pawlu*, *Saverio/Saver*, *Giuseppe/Gużep/Zepi*, *Emanuele/Manwel/Leli*, *Michele/Mikiel/Kieli*, *Alfredo/Fredu*, *Francesco/Frangisku/Cikku*, *Antonio/Toninu/Toni* (male names); *Angela/Angla*, *Maria/Marija/Mari*, *Giovanna/Ganna*, *Luiga/Giġa*, *Concetta/Cetta* (female names).⁴ Baptismal names in parish records were always entered in their full Italian form; however, in everyday practice, such names were usually rendered in their vernacular and hypocoristic forms, often echoing Sicilian sound patterns (namely *u < o*, *i < e*).

The British period (1800–1964), as expected, ushered a new predilection for typical English names: *George, Albert, Edward, Edgar, Godwin, Victoria, Frances, Therese/a, Margaret, and Elizabeth*. This trend, however, only became overtly evident after the 1920s. Broadly speaking, they have largely replaced traditional Maltese and Italian forenames. More recent additions include: *Kevin, Jason, Keith, Shaun, Brian, Clive, Janice, Amy, Diane, Daphne, Katia, Simone*. Some of these English names are usually rendered in colloquial or familiar forms: *Eddie, Ronnie, Lorry, Betty, Debby*. Up till the early 20th century, social interaction between the British and the Maltese was minimal, but the two world wars brought the two peoples in closer contact, and this resulted in a considerable number of mixed marriages. Nowadays, one also encounters names from other linguistic sources, mainly Germanic (e.g. *Karl, Kurt, Ludwig, Jurgen, Ingrid, Irma, Helga, etc.*), Spanish (*Ramon, Carlos, Alejandro, Xavier, Romina, etc.*), and French (e.g. *Domenique, Gabrielle, Nathalie, Etienne, René, Pierre, etc.*).

A country's stock of first names is indeed very telling as it reflects its history, religion, literature, culture, and aspirations. However, kinship and religious naming traditions in modern Malta have lost much of their appeal. Vernacular names have literally vanished, except for the sporadic *Nina, Xandru* and *David*.⁵ At the same time, Christian votive names are now conferred with less and less frequency, even though biblical names (mostly in their English version) have lately made a formidable comeback: *Matthew, Isaac, Daniel, Samuel, Luke, Gabriel, Aaron, Rebecca, Rachel, Sarah, Deborah, Martha*. The Church, however, still exerts a considerable amount of influence. When Catholic parents give their child a non-Christian name they are often requested to give the child a Christian name as well. Since the average Maltese individual may have four names or more, usually god-parents also confer other Christian names.

Today, one often finds that no special attention is given to the original meaning or etymological connotations of the given name. Many names are simply bestowed for their supposed phonetic beauty (e.g. *Rachelle, Arianne, Charmaine*) or for their perceived exotic or fanciful quality (e.g. *Olaf, Sacha, Emerson*). One criterion Maltese parents are surely respecting is uniqueness. The underlying vogue seems to be that the more fanciful and alien-sounding the name is the better: *Kelton, Ayrton, Clayton, Oneke, Blodwen, Elian*. Most modern names are derived from the realm of pop culture. The names of renowned actors and rock stars lead the way: *Brad, Clive, Dylan, Jessica, Kirsten, Nicole*. Fictitious character names derive from novels, films, television serials (especially soap opera) have also furnished their quotas: *Justin, Dean, Timothy, Sue Ellen, Brenda, Kelly*. Male names sometimes echo those of famous footballers: *Ronaldo, Dejan, Lionel, Wayne, Lothar*.

The contemporary Maltese anosmatic repertoire is hence linguistically and culturally pluralistic. This can be succinctly illustrated by the various reflexes of the first name *John* and *Joseph*: *Giovanni, Vanni, John, Johnny, Jean, Juan, Ivan, Ian, Jan, Johan, Joan, Joanna/e, Jana, Janine; Giuseppe, Beppe,*

Ġużeppi, Żeppi, Peppi, Peppe, Joseph, Joe, Josef, Giuseppa, Ġuża, Josephine, Josepha, Josefa, etc. Within a social context dictated by cultural globalization, Maltese parents do not have the slightest qualms to bestow names derived from Indian, Russian, Scandinavian and Hispanic sources. The prismatic nature of names is also reflected in certain double names such as *Anthony Mario* and *Amanda Francesca* (English + Italian), or *Alessia Carmen* and *Silvio Raymond* (Italian + English).⁶ Many Maltese names, irrespective of their linguistic source, are derived from shortened (or familiar) forms of given names, hypocoristic (or pet) forms (e.g. *Max, Zack, Jake, Alex, Thea, Nora*), and forms with diminutive suffixes (e.g. *Antonella, Graziella, Annette, Gabrielle/a, Bernardine, Maximilian*).

Maltese law does not regulate the conferment of names. The country still lacks legislation which precludes the employment of outrageous or bizarre names on helpless children (e.g. *Rodent, Holy Mary*). However, the Public Registry has, on some rare occasions, arbitrarily proscribed names which were deemed improper or downright demeaning (e.g. *Xitan 'Devil, Cleavage*).

¹My full name, for example, is Mario Massimo Giorgio Andrea Cassar. *Mario* was bestowed by my parents; *Massimo* and *Giorgio* were conferred by my two god-parents; and *Andrea* was added by the parish priest in honour of St Andrew, the patron saint of my village, Luqa.

²St Paul is incidentally the patron saint of Malta.

³By far, the first sizeable and systematic lists of Maltese given names date back to the Late Middle Ages; the most essential being undoubtedly the Militia Roll of ca. 1419/20 and the *Angara* Roster of the 1480s. The hegemony of Italian/Sicilian names is most conspicuous.

⁴A good sample of Maltese names is provided by Joseph Aquilina in his *Maltese-English Dictionary* (Malta: Midsea Books, 1987–1990, 2 volumes, pp. 1665–72).

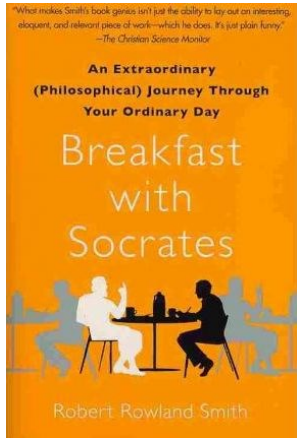
⁵Even some Romance and English names are now considered old fashioned and their application has drastically declined: *Mario, Saverio, Grazio, Vincent, Alfred, Raymond, Maurice, Lucia, Lourdes, Dolores, Rita, Rosaria, Antida, etc.*

⁶Otherwise, double names are conventionally derived from the same linguistic pool: *Elizabeth Anne, Mark Anthony, Marie Claire, Jean Paul, Giovanna Maria, Franco Roberto, Judas Thaddeus*

Librarian's Choice

RECOMMENDED READINGS FROM OUR SHELVES

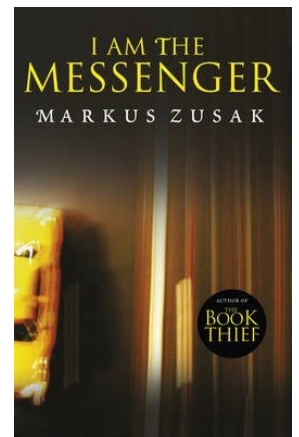
Breakfast with Socrates by Robert Rowland Smith



What is the philosophy of sweat? Reality TV? Domestic warfare? Making up and having sex? Take a sparkling ride through an ordinary day with hilarious philosophical gadfly Robert Rowland Smith in *Breakfast with Socrates*. Ever want to have a bagel with Hegel? Eggs with Bacon? Or spend a day with Socrates, Mill, Herodotus, or Kant, able to pick their brains about the most mundane moments of your life? Former Oxford Philosophy Fellow Robert Rowland Smith thought he would, and so with dry wit and marvelous invention, Smith whisks you through a typical day, injecting a little philosophy into it at every turn. Wake up with Descartes, go to work with Plato and Nietzsche, visit the gym with Kant, have sex with Ovid (or Simone de Beauvoir). As the day unfolds, Smith grounds complex, abstract ideas in concrete experience, giving you an informal introduction to applying philosophy to everyday life. Not only does *Breakfast with Socrates* cover the basic arguments of philosophy, it brings an irresistible, insouciant charm to its big questions, waking us up to the richest possible range of ideas on how to live. Neither breakfast, lunch, nor dinner will ever be the same again.

I am the Messenger by Markus Zusak

From the author of *The Book Thief* comes this darkly funny and ultimately uplifting thriller which proves that anyone can be extraordinary. Ed Kennedy is just your less-than-average Joe who is hopelessly in love with his best friend, Audrey. But after he single-handedly manages to catch a bank robber, he receives a playing card in the mail: the Ace of Diamonds. This is the first message. Four more will follow. But before this particular card game can end, Ed will be changed forever . . . Will Audrey love the man he has become?



The Final Empire by Brandon Sanderson

For a thousand years the ash fell and no flowers bloomed. For a thousand years the Skaa slaved in misery and lived in fear while the Lord Ruler reigned with absolute power and ultimate terror, a divinely invincible leader. Hope is long lost, until a terribly scarred, heart-broken half-Skaa in the depths of the most hellish prison and discovers he has the powers of a Mistborn. A brilliant thief and natural leader, Kelsier will turn his talents to the ultimate caper: one with the Lord Ruler himself as the mark. Only he's not just planning the greatest heist in history, he's plotting the overthrow of a divine despot. Kelsier recruited the underworld's elite, the smartest and most trustworthy allomancers, each of whom shares one of his many powers, and all of whom relish a high-stakes challenge. But even with the best criminal crew ever assembled, Kel's plan looks like a long shot, until luck brings a ragged girl named Vin into his life. Like him, she's a half-Skaa orphan, but she's lived a much harsher life. Vin has learned to expect betrayal from everyone she meets, and gotten it. She will have to learn to trust, if Kel is to help her master powers of which she never dreamed.





My Love for Mathematics

by Andrew Debono Cauchi

Introduction

As a student of Pure Mathematics, I nurture a deep passion for anything essentially mathematical in its nature, from logical puzzles involving numbers to books pertaining to the history of Mathematics. This fascination with Mathematics occurs through a continuous process of engaging discoveries of the various aspects of the science as outlined below.

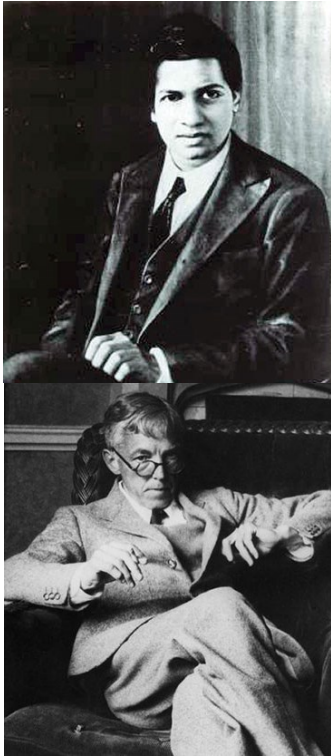
The components of Mathematics

Mathematics may be thought of as made up of two distinct components; pure logic and a scientific body of knowledge. The first of these characteristics is inherent to the average person and comprises of the cognitive function of reasoning i.e. the ability to deduce conclusions from a given set of conditions or data. For example, if one is presented with a visual pattern of two arcs and is asked to complete it, the logical way is to add another two arcs. Thus, this may be described as mathematical in its essence as it consists of pure logic. The second of these components is nurtured by years of study and training since it consists of a building process which supplies the mathematician with the necessary tools and rigorous scientific knowledge to complete mathematical work. Having considered this, it is worth noting that the ideal mathematician should interweave these two predominant components, and the great mathematician should eventually manage to balance them. In the words of Ellenberg (b. 1971), "Math[ematics] is like an atomic-powered prosthesis that you attach to your common sense, vastly multiplying its reach and strength." (Ellenberg, 2014)¹

¹ Jordan Ellenberg, "When am I going to use this?," in *How Not to be Wrong, The Hidden Maths of Everyday Life*, (Great Britain: Allen Lane, 2014), 12-13.

Mathematics is the queen of the sciences

When thinking about Mathematics, we must first and foremost consider it as the purest science of all – the queen of the sciences. “Mathematics underlies the pursuit of every scientific endeavour” (University of Malta, 2017)² and thus – engineers, astronomers, physicists, computer scientists, chemists, biologists, architects, logicians, philosophers, science teachers and all other scientists encounter the diverse application of Mathematics at some point or another during their professional and academic careers. Furthermore, all the existing sciences have persisted and endured the test of time and practicality due to the fact that they have a highly mathematical foundation i.e. the components of Mathematics are interwoven in their basic principles.



Mathematics is the perfect language

Secondly, Mathematics is the perfect language. Anything you write or say in Mathematics will be interpreted and understood commonly in all parts of the world on a global level. Thus, Mathematics knows no boundaries – it will not realise or conform to any race, culture, gender, physical appearance, religion, ideology, politics, age or nationality. In fact, very frequently throughout the history of Mathematics the best of knowledge is conceived by the humblest and most unexpected of mathematicians rather than by the wealthy or famous. Such examples include Marie-Sophie Germain (1776-1831), Ada Lovelace (1815-1852), Isaac Newton (1643-1727), Emmy Noether (1882-1935), Carl Gustav Jacob Jacobi (1804-1851), Srinivasa Ramanujan (1887-1920) and relatively recently Paul Erdős (1913-1996). These are all fine examples of mathematicians who lived humble lives in different places and times – but they had one thing in common. They put Mathematics before everything, even their very selves. In my opinion, this is what every mathematician should seek, i.e. the ability to see a higher purpose in Mathematics than your own self.

Srinivasa Ramanujan (top) and G.H. Hardy (bottom) two great mathematicians

Mathematics is art

Mathematics can also be seen to some degree as an art form. I often find that a solution to a seemingly complex problem would lie in a set of rudimentary or basic techniques handpicked and manipulated to meet the given conditions of the problem. Thus, a mathematician can be compared to an artist who carefully selects and blends his colours or to a poet who chooses his metaphors and phrases wisely. Another artistic element visible in Mathematics is that like in art there is no work exactly like another; there may be similarities and even close intimacy between problems but they will never be totally identical.

Mathematics is theology

Other mathematicians also argue of a theological perspective to Mathematics. An example of such a mathematician is Paul Gordan (1837-1912). When presented with the proof for Hilbert’s basis theorem, Gordan understood that the proof merely proved the existence of a basis but not the appropriate construction that was required for it. Thus, Gordan had to believe that such a basis existed without seeing one, prompting him to say “This is not mathematics; this is theology.”³ Ramanujan also proposes that “[a]n equation for me has no meaning unless it expresses a thought of God.” (Hoffman, 1998)⁴ I believe this to be true to a certain extent but would advise not to stretch this concept too far beyond the practical world of logic and science.

² University of Malta. “Welcome to the Department of Mathematics website” Accessed September 16, 2017. <https://www.um.edu.mt/science/math>s

³ Art of Problem Solving. “Hilbert’s Basis Theorem.” Accessed October 25, 2017. https://artofproblemsolving.com/wiki/index.php?title=Hilbert%27s_Basis_Theorem

⁴ Paul Hoffman, “Epszi’s Enigma,” in *The Man Who Loved Only Numbers*, (London: Fourth Estate Limited, 1998), 85.

Mathematics describes the infinite

Another issue we frequently miss out on stressing when discussing Mathematics is its infinitude. Consider the question: How many integers are there? Is there a finite value? After some thought, one may realise that the answer is, no. It is possible to know a lot about certain group of numbers, for example prime numbers or irrational numbers, but even with this extensive supply of knowledge we are still “boy[s] playing on the seashore” (Csicsery, 2017)⁵ as Newton rightly put it. There is still a whole ocean of theorems to discover, observe, conjecture and prove. This infinite quality exists quite singularly on such a grand scale only in Mathematics.

Mathematics is beautiful

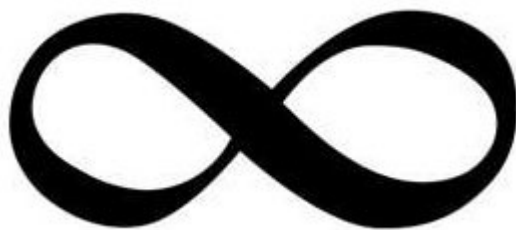
An element of aesthetic beauty can be viewed in Mathematics by different mathematicians in different contexts. This can emerge through the simplicity of a proof or how it links the branches of Mathematics it employs together. The generalisation of a theorem or formula can also display beauty by the fact that it applies to *every conceivable case*. For example, the circumference of a circle is *always* given by $2\pi r$ or πd no matter the size of the circle or the way in which the circle is presented.

Conclusion

I have thus made it my life’s mission to convince as many people as possible of the relevance of Mathematics in everyone’s daily life. By extension, I must also do as G.H. Hardy (1877-1947) has done and “propose to put forward an apology for mathematics” (Hardy, 2016)⁶ for the times where this aim was not fulfilled. Science, language, art, theology, infinity, beauty, logic and cognitive function – these are the phenomena I find and believe to be united tightly through Mathematics.

⁵ YouTube. “N is a number. Paul Erdos.” Accessed September 16, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCQwh9fsU7I>

⁶ G.H. Hardy, *A Mathematician’s Apology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 63.



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Patrick Ness



Patrick Ness is a British-American author born near the Fort Belvoir army base on 17th October 1971. His father was a lieutenant in the US Army and has lived in the three different states of Hawaii, Washington and California before moving to London at 28.

He currently holds a dual citizenship - Ness became a naturalised British citizen in 2005. Following the legalisation of same-sex marriage in California, Ness married his partner in August 2013.

As of 2012 he reviews books for the Guardian but has taught Creative Writing at Oxford University and written articles for the Sunday Telegraph, the Daily Telegraph and the Times Literary Supplement.

Ness read for English Literature at the University of Southern California and worked as a corporate writer before publishing his first novel in 2003, *The Crash of Hennington*.

A collection of short stories *Topics About Which I Know Nothing* was published in 2004.

He is most known for his 'Chaos Walking' trilogy for young adults. The first volume *The Knife of Never Letting Go* was published in 2008, followed by *The Ask and the Answer* (2009) and *Monsters of Men* (2010).

Patrick Ness has won several awards including the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize and Booktrust Teenage Prize for the Chaos Walking Trilogy.

A Monster Calls (2011) was originally to be written by Siobhan Dowd, a fellow writer with the same editor as Ness. However, following her August 2007 death, their editor arranged for Ness to be the writer and for the story to be illustrated by Jim Kay. For their work they received the Carnegie and the CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal respectively. This was the first time that a book has won both medals.

In May 2013, Ness was revealed to be the author of a Doctor Who e-short, *Tip of the Tongue*, written in honour of the show's 50th anniversary.

Ness has published his fourth young-adult novel *More Than This* in 2013 and this was later shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal 2015.

The Crane's Wife, a novel for adults was published in 2014, followed by *The Rest of Us Live Here* in 2015. His most recent book *Release* (2017) was described by Ness as a private and personal book than any before it.

"I owe most of the breadth of my reading to libraries, and particularly to librarians who seemed to know exactly when to recommend and when to look the other way when an eager young reader possibly overreached. But, and I really believe this, what better way for reading to seem dangerous and risky?" -
Patrick Ness

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Pittura ta' Domenischini: Sta. Ċilja u Valerjanu

Sta. Ċeċilja V. M. – Qaddisa Patruna tal-mużika

minn Mro. Manoel Pirotta

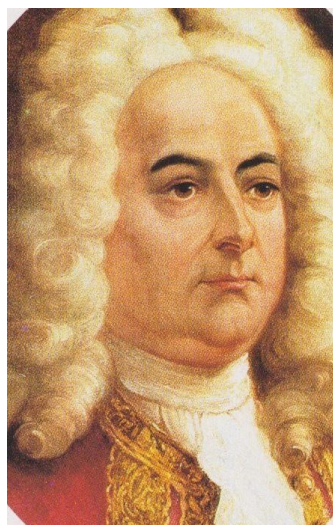
Sta. Ċeċilja hija l-Qaddisa patruna tal-mużika u hija ħafna għall-qalb il-mużiċisti madwar id-dinja tant li hawn min iħares il-ġurnata tat-22 ta' Novembru b'quddiesa u tqarbina. F'Malta, l-Għaqda Każini tal-Banda tiegħu ħsieb torganizza quddiesa fil-konkatedral ta' San Ġwann fejn is-socjetajiet mużikali jieħdu sehem fiha u jgibu l-istandardi rispettivi tagħhom. Din l-attività tkun segwita minn marċ brijuz fit-toroq ewlenin tal-Belt Valletta. L-istess ħaġa ssir fil-gżira t'Għawdex. Fl-istess żmien ukoll, jittella' kuncert sinfoniku fit-Teatru Manoel li jrid jinkludi xogħol ta' kompożitur Malti. F'Malta m'hawnx pajjiż bil-festa u l-istatwa tagħha u lanqas m'hawnx każin tal-banda wieħed li hu msemmi għaliha.

L-Atti ta' Sta. Ċilja nkitbu ħafna aktar wara il-martirju tagħha u għaldaqstant wieħed ma tantx jista' joqgħod storikament fuqhom. Hija trabbiet ta' nisranija f'familja nobbli Rumana u kienet tiċċaħħad minn kollox għall-imħabba t'Alla. Izda missierha ried bilfors iżewwiġha lil Valerju, patrizju żagħżuġh. Ċilja obdjet b'rispett lejn missierha. Imma waqt it-tiegħ hi bdiet tkanta f'qalbha l-innu tal-purità u wara li għadda kollox fetħet qalbha ma' Valerju. Qaltli li hi diġà kienet tgħarrset ma' angliu t'Alla, izda qabel ma jikkonverti u jitgħammed ma setax jarah. Valerju obda u mar għand l-isqof Urbanu biex jgħallmu 'l min hu l-vera Alla u mbagħad jgħammdu. Lura f'daru, Valerju jsib lil martu tistennieh u maġenbha angliu li min-naħa tiegħu poġġa klila bil-ward tal-ġilju fuq ras l-għarajjes. Aktar tard, anki Tiburzju, ħu Valerju, ikkonverta. Iz-żewġt aħwa laħqu għamli ħafna ġid qabel ma ġew ikkundannati għall-mewt minn Almakju, l-istess bħalma ġara lill-fizzjal Massimu talli ikkonverta. Ċilja difnithom fiċ-ċimiterju ta' Pretestatu. Ftit wara mess lilha wkoll u giet ikkundannata biex tmut fgata fil-banju privat tagħha. Ġara izda li, il-qawwa tan-nar ma kienx biżżejjed għaliha u ngħatat ordni biex suldat jaqtagħlha rasha barra. Sfortunatament, hi ma metitx mill-ewwel bid-daqqiet tal-mannara fuq għonqha u damet tlitt ijiem agunija. Mal-mewt tagħha marru jżuruha xi nsara u difnuha fil-kripta taċ-Ċeċilji, fil-katakombi ta' San Kallistu, u li fiha nsibu skrizzjoni u xi pitturi. Kien biss wara li nstab il-ġisem tagħha li wieħed seta' jikkonferma l-eżistenza tagħha.

Hafn' huma l-kompożituri li kitbu xi biċċa xogħol mużikali f'għieħ Sta. Ċilja, fosthom l-*Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* ta' Henry Purcell (1659–95), kompożitur Barokk Inġliż. Dax-xogħol jikkonsisti f'sett t'erba' xogħlijiet korali, kollha iddedikati lil dil-Qaddisa. Purcell kien ikkompeta bihom fl-ewwel festival li qatt gie organizzat f'għieħha mis-Socjeta Muzikali ta' Londra mwaqqfa minn grupp ta' muzicisti u oħrajn li jħobbu l-mużika. Il-konkurs kien sar fit-22 ta' Novembru tal-1683. Fil-mużika, ode hu xogħol ta' natura ċeremonjali fejn il-versi tal-poeżija jġu mmużikati b'tali mod li jirriflettu dan is-sentiment fl-istess ħin nobbli u dinjituż. L-ode tal-1692, *Hail! Bright Cecilia* (Z. 328), jitqies bħala l-aktar popolari fost l-erbgħa. It-test bl-Inġliż hu ta' Nicholas Brady (1659–1726), poeta Irlandiż imwieled fl-istess sena ma' Purcell. Brady kien ispirat mill-poeżija *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day* (1687) ta' John Dryden (1631–1700) li fiha jingħad li kienet Ċilja li ivvintat l-orgni. It-test jagħmel ħafna referenzi għal strumenti mużikali u x-xogħol jinvolvi varjetà wiesgħa ta' kantanti solisti u s-sehem ta' strumenti obbligati. Ħafna mill-arji li fiha jużaw forom ballabli u huma orkestrati b'mod mill-aktar originali li qabel qatt ma kienu nstemgħu bħalhom.



Henry Purcell



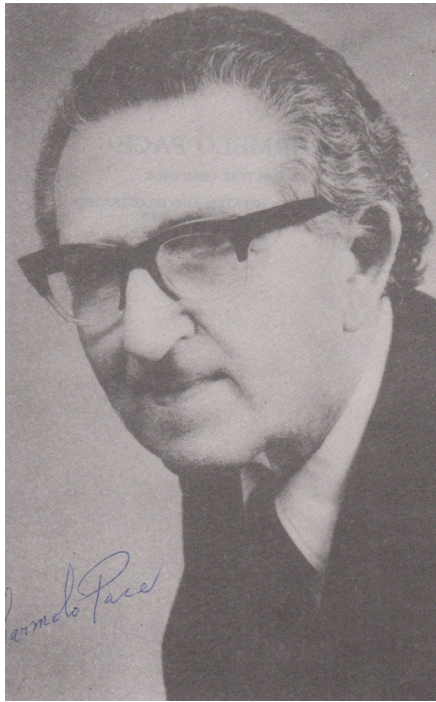
Marc-Antoine Charpentier

Xogħlijiet oħra f'għieħ Ċilja huma wħud mill-Oratorji – fejn it-test immużikat ikun ta' natura reliġjuża - tal-kompożitur Franciż Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1634–1704) fosthom, *In honorem Caeciliae, Valeriani et Tiburtij canticum*, kif ukoll diversi verżjonijiet ta' *Caecilia virgo et martyr* fuq librett ta' Philippe Goibaut (1629-94). Hemm imbagħad il-Cantata *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*, *Alexander's Feast* ([HWV 75](#)) ta' George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) komposta fl-1736 fuq librett ta' Newburgh Hamilton (1691–1761). L-awtur Irlandiż ibbaża ħafna l-librett tiegħu fuq l-ode ta' Dryden li jġib l-istess isem. Dan kien gie immużikat minn Jeremiah Clarke (1674–1707). Xogħol ta' kompożitur Barokk Inġliż ieħor huwa dak ta' William Walond (1725–70) li jismu *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day* fuq versi tal-poeta Inġliż Alexander Pope (1688–1744). Min-naħa tiegħu, il-kompożitur Romantiku Franciż, Charles Gounod (1818–93) ukoll kiteb

quddiesa solenni f'għieħha. Erba' xogħlijiet ta' kompożituri Inġliżi tas-seklu 20 huma *Hymn to St. Cecilia*, *Op. 27* għal kor *a cappella* ta' Benjamin Britten (1913-76) fuq versi ta' W.H. Auden (1907-73); *A Hymn to Saint Cecilia* ta' Herbert Howells (1892 – 1983) fuq versi ta' Ursula Vaughan Williams (1911- 2007); *For Saint Cecilia*, *Op. 30*, ode għal tenor, kor u orkestra ta' Gerald Finzi (1901 – 56) u kliem ta' Edmund Blunden (1896–1974), u *A Hymn to Saint Cecilia* (1966) ta' Michael Hurd (1928–2006) fuq versi wkoll ta' Dryden. Xogħol mill-aktar riċenti huwa dak Frederik Magle, imwieled id-Danimarka fl-1977, *Cantata to Saint Cecilia*, xogħol ibbażat fuq ħajjet il-Qaddisa.



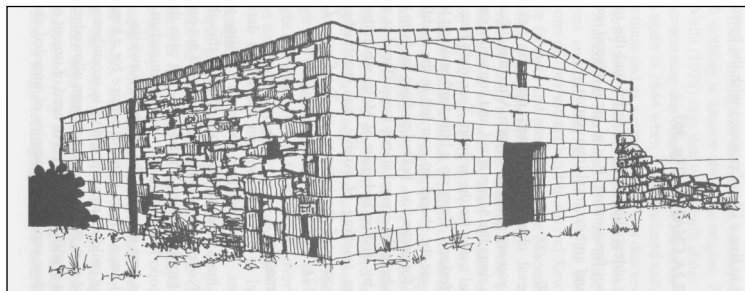
Charles Gounod



Carmelo Pace

Xi xogħlijiet f'għieħ Sta. Ċilja minn kompożituri Maltin insibu wkoll: *Santa Cecilia (Concert Overture)* għall-banda ta' George Martin (1920-91) fl-okkażjoni tal-75 sena mit-twaqqif tas-Socjetà Sta. Marija Banda Re Ġorġ V tal-Imqabba. Indaqget għall-ewwel darba fit-30 ta' Lulju 1985 waqt kuncert kommemorattiv taħt id-direzzjoni tal-istess kompożitur; *Hymn to St. Cecilia* ta' Carmelo Pace (1906-93) għal żewġ vuċijiet u pjanu fuq versi bl-Ingliż ta' George Zammit (1908-90). Indaqg għall-ewwel darba mill-istudenti tal-iskola sekondarja tal-bniet tal-Gżira. Pace kiteb ukoll *Fall, Leaves, Fall* għal kor S.A.T.B. *a capella* fuq versi tal-poetessa Inġliża Emily Brontë (1818-48). Esegwit għall-ewwel darba f'Assam l-Indja fl-14 t'Aw-wissu 1963 mis-*St. Cecilia Choral Society* fl-okkażjoni taċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet ad unur il-Qdusija Tiegħu Papa Pawlu VI. Il-kor, li kien magħmul minn mitt korist, kantaw dil-għanja quddiem udjenza ta' 6000 ruħ; *Santa Cecilia (Sinfonia)* tal-Għawdx Mikiel Farrugia (1898-1969). Ma' dil-lista nżidu wkoll is-*Socjetà Orchestrale Santa Ċecilja* mwaqqfa minn Paolo Vella (1873-1948). Kien kiteb innu ddedikat lil dis-Socjetà li ndaqq fit-Teatru Rjal.

F'Malta, m'hawnx banda li ġgħib l-isem ta' Sta. Ċilja. L-istess jingħad għal ħafna festi li jiġu ċelebrati matul is-sena fejn l-ebda parroċċa ma toħroġ bl-istatwa tagħha jew imqar isiru xi forma ta' festi interni jew esterni ad unurha. Anki fil-knejjes u/jew kappelli Maltin, rari ssib xi pittura tagħha. Donnu li, matul is-sekli, il-pitturi ftit kienu jiddelittaw b'dil-Qaddisa, bil-konsegwenza li hi qatt ma sabet postha fil-kultura lokali. Infatti, insibu biss kappella waħda iddedikata lilha, u din tinsab f'Għajnsielem, Għawdex. Dil-kappella medjevali hi aktarx l-eqdem waħda li għadha wieqfa f'Għawdex fl-istat originali tagħha. Hdejha nsibu wkoll it-torri ta' Sta. Ċilja mibni fl-1613. Madankollu, f'xi knejjes Maltin insibu xi kwadri mpittrin: *Is-Sultan David u Santa Ċecilja* ta' Toussaint Busuttil (1912-94) f'waħda mill-arzelli li hemm mas-saqaf tal-knisja parrokkjali ta' Sta. Katarina taż-Żejtun; *Santa Ċecilja u l-Profeta David* (1909) ta' Giuseppe Cali (1846-1930) fil-knisja tal-Lunzjata (il-Qadima), il-Birgu; *San Ċecilja* ta' Antonio Falzon (1805-65), kwadrett li jinsab fil-kunvent tal-knisja ta' Santu Wistin, il-Belt; *Santa Ċecilja* (1946) ta' Gianni Vella (1885-1977) f'waħda mill-arzelli tal-orgni. F'arzella oħra insibu l-*Profeta David*, persunaġġ bibliku li wkoll għandu x'jaqsam mal-mużika.

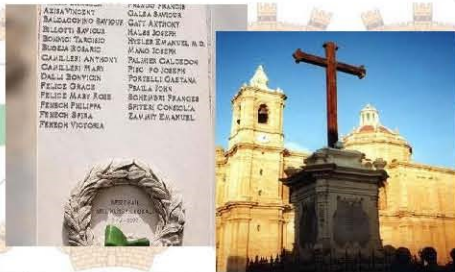


Kappella ddedikata lil Santa Ċecilja, Għajnsielem, Għawdex

Minnu li l-lista hi qsajra, imma talanqas issa nafu li għandna ftit xogħlijiet t'artisti prominenti Maltin iddedikati lil din il-Qaddisa. Għall-kuntrarju tal-knejjes, tista' tgħid li, fil-każini tal-banda dejjem issib kwadru tagħha mdendel f'xi post prominenti. Madankollu, ftit huma dawk il-bandisti li jirrikorru għaliha meta jiġu wiċċ imb wiċċ ma' xi passaqġ mimli tilja noti.

Citta' Beland - Iż-Żejtun

Lil hinn mill-Belt Valletta
Daqstant eqreb it-tlett ibliet
Tinsab iċ-Citta' Beland,
Iż-Żejtun, kif insibuha fil-kitbiet



Min kull trejqa jew mghoddija
Sqaq jew pjazza ta' din il-belt
Issib tifikira li tliessen grajja
Ta' nies li thabtu ma kull ghelt

Villel, djar u kemm palazzi
Fuqhom mnaqqxa b'ittri kbar
Insibu l-isem ta' dawk in-nobbli
Li kienu jghammru fil-madwar



Żewġ djalleti hawn fir-rahal
Bih jittkellmu ghandna whud
Ghax fiż-Żejtun hawn żewġt inhawi
Ir-rahal t'isfel u dak ta' fuwq



B'San Girgor l-eqdem kapella
Ta' San Niklaw u ta' Hal Tmiem
Hawn ukoll dik tas-Sinjura
San Klement u l-Bon Konsill

Fiż-Żejtun hawn bosta pjazez
Li jkomplu lir-rahal iżejnuh
F'wahda minnhom jarma l-monti
Li kull nhar t'Erbgħa hafna jżuruh



Għal għanejja ż-Żejtun jissemma
Għax minnhu harġu it-tajbin
Bħal 'Budaj' u il-'Bambinu'
It-tnejn gieħ għamlu lil Maltin



U biex lilhom nibqu niftakru
Iddedikajna proprju il-ġnien
Fejn fiħ niġu għal passigġata
U mat-tfal nghaddu siegħa żmien



Rachel Debattista 2017

Literary Calendar

December

- 1st December 1887 : Sherlock Holmes makes his first appearance in print, "A Study in Scarlet"
- 3rd December 1947 : Tennessee Williams's 'A Streetcar named Desire' opens on Broadway
- 6th December 1953 : Vladimir Nabokov finishes 'Lolita'
- 7th December 1968 : Richard Dodd returns a library book his great grandfather took out in 1823
- 8th December 1980 : Mark David Chapman shoots John Lennon, then sits down to read 'The Catcher in the Rye', his copy inscribed with the words "This is my testament" and signed as Holden Caulfield
- 10th December 1830 : Emily Dickenson is born
- 16th December 1775 : Jane Austen is born
- 19th December 1848 : Emily Bronte dies
- 20th December 1929 : 'Lady Chatterley's Lover' is banned in the US
- 21st December 1940 : F. Scott Fitzgerald dies
- 26th December 1891 : Henry Miller is born
- 28th December 1732 : Benjamin Franklin publishes the first instalment of 'Poor Richard's Almanack'
- 30th December 1865 : Rudyard Kipling is born

January

- 1st January 1919 : J.D. Salinger is born
- 3rd January 1892 : J.R.R. Tolkien is born
- 4th January 1965 : T.S. Elliot dies
- 10th January 1929 : Tintin makes his first appearance in Le Petit Vingtième
- 12th January 1876 : Jack London is born
- 13th January 1898 : Emile Zola's infamous editorial 'J'accuse' is printed
- 15th January 1831 : Victor Hugo finishes 'The Hunchback of Notre Dame'
- 17th January 1820 : Anne Bronte is born
- 18th January 1936 : Rudyard Kipling dies
- 19th January 1809 : Edgar Allan Poe is born
- 21st January 1950 : George Orwell dies
- 28th January 1813 : Pride and Prejudice is published
- 30th January 1815 : Burned Library of Congress re-established with Thomas Jefferson's donation of 6500 volumes

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<https://booklovergifts.com/blogs/news/45900996-literary-calendar-list-of-author-birthdays-deaths-important-literary-dates>



DAN MHUX TAL-KOTBA

minn Leanne Ellul

Immagina ftit. Spazju antik. Kafè. Kafetterija. U ħafna kliem. Uħud mill-ideat kbar fl-oqsma tal-Letteratura bdew minn ħwienet tal-kafè, madwar mejda bi ftit siggijiet. Hemmhekk, diversi intellettuali, ħassieba u kittieba kienu jħabbtu l-ideat tagħhom u jagħtu nifs lil ideat godda.

Dan il-kunċett imur lura sekli ilu. Hu l-idea tal-kafetteriji Torok. Jew saħansitra l-Agora Griega. Fis-seklu 12 f'Mekka kien hemm postijiet magħrufa bħala "djar tal-kafè" u aktar tard, fis-seklu 17 din l-idea nfixet mal-Imperu Ottoman sa ma daħlet fl-Ewropa. L-ewwel "dar tal-kafè" fl-Ewropa kienet f'Venezja fl-1647. Fil-bidu tal-1650 bdew jifih u fl-Ingilterra u fl-1683 fetħet l-ewwel "dar" fi Vjenna. Aktar tard dawn il-kafetteriji fi Vjenna saru magħrufa bħala "The Viennese Coffee House Culture." Madwar l-1800 Café Griensteidl sar post popolari għal grupp ta' figuri letterarji magħrufa bħala "Jung Wien" (Young Vienna) fosthom Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Arthur Schnitzler u Karl Kraus. Kienu grupp ta' kittieba zgħażaġh li kienu jiltaqgħu f'dil-kafetterija, imbagħad eventwalment f'oħrajn. Kienu huma li taw bidu għal-"letteratura tad-djar tal-kafè".

Għalhekk, dawn l-ispace kienu l-qalba ta' attività letterarja li ggib flimkien nies minn oqsma differenti biex qabelx-ejn jittkellmu. (Iva, kien iż-żmien meta ma kellhomx mowbajls u distrazzjonijiet teknoloġiċi oħrajn!) X'tagħti biex tmur lura dak iż-żmien u tesperjenza mqar mument ta' kafè wieħed ma' dawn in-nies kbar? Xi ftit jew wisq bħall-film "Midnight in Paris" (dir. Woody Allen) li fih Gil imur lura fl-1920 u jiltaqa' ma' Jean Cocteau, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway u oħrajn. Kif jitleq mit-tielet bar jerga' jigi lura għar-realtà tal-2010, jintebaħ li dak il-bar issa sar post fejn taħsel il-ħwejjeg. Xejn gdid; ħares ftit lejn il-binjiet mimlija ruħ fil-Belt mibdula f'Boutique Hotels. Lukandi fuq lukandi bla gost.

Fi Franza, mhux biss f'Parigi, din l-idea ta' spazji pubbliċi li jiltaqgħu fihom il-ħassieba kienet popolari ħafna. Fl-1686 l-Isqalli Francesco Procopio dei Coltelli fetaħ Café Procope fi triq l'Ancienne Comédie. Din kienet l-ewwel kafetterija f'Parigi. Immagina lil Victor Hugo, Paul Verlaine, Honoré de Balzac, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, u oħrajn miġbur qaqqoċċa jgħidu kelma jew tnejn. U fuq kollox jiffilosofizzaw! Fil-film tal-1995 "Total Eclipse" (dir. Agnieszka Holland) Paul Verlaine u Arthur Rimbaud jiltaqgħu f'kafetteriji bħal dawn.

Snin wara, fi żmien it-Tieni Gwerra Dinjija, Café de Flore sar wieħed mill-ispazji l-iktar popolari fi Franza għal awturi u ħassieba bħal Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, Jean Cocteau u Violette Leduc. Qed taqraw tajjeb. Hawn insibu n-nisa. F'dan iż-żmien in-nisa bdew isemmgħu iktar leħinhom, jiġġieldu biex jin-stemgħu u jippubblikaw xogħolhom bħall-irġiel. Jippubblikaw xogħlijiet iktar feroċi u iktar imqanqla minn tal-irġiel. Ma kinitx ħaġa rari li ssib nisa bħal de Beauvoir u Leduc jiddiskutu f'kafetteriji bħal dawn, kif jidher fil-film tal-2013 "Violette" (dir. Martin Provost).



Jean-Paul Sartre et Simone de Beauvoir au Café de Flore.
Photographies de Brassai.

Din l-idea imbagħad baqgħet tinfirex. Wara kollox, kif tista' tgħid le għal kafè tajjeb? Imma, ċajt apparti, din riċetta li taħdem. Marc Sautet fl-1992 bena fuq l-ideat ta' qablu u ħareġ bil-kuncett ta' "cafés-philos". Sal-1998, is-sena li fiha miet Sautet, kien hemm mal-mitt kafetterija ta' dan it-tip fi Franza u madwar mija u ħamsin oħra madwar id-dinja.

U f'Malta? Jekk tasal wasla sal-Belt (taqbeż il-lukandi stile boutique), u tgħaddi sal-Ġugar jew Cafè Society ikollok dewqa ta' spazji bħal dawn. Mhux ħaġa kbira tinzel s'hemm u ssib intellettuali lokali (u mhumiex, flimkien ma' psewdo-intellettuali) jaqsmu xi qraw, x'raw u x'semgħu. Diversi programmi ta' kitba kreattiva bħal "Taħżiż" (Aġenzija Żgħażaġh u l-Għaqda tal-Malti) u klabbs tal-kotba bħal "ejja naqr'haw" (klabb tal-kotba fl-iskola sekondarja Santa Dorotea) jikkapitalizzaw fuq din l-idea wkoll.



TAL-KOTBA jwiegħed stimolu għal ħsibijiet u ideat ġenwini ġodda. Nuża ġenwini għax daqskemm spazji bħal dawn jistgħu jixprunaw ideat ġodda, jistgħu jkunu wkoll fabbriki ta' ħsibijiet plastiċi u sfurzati. Hemm awtenticità sabiħa fil-kelma, fil-poeżija, li ma ssibhiex f'elegija jew f'lirika (biss), fil-mużikalità li joffru r-ritmu u r-rima. Fil-qawwa tal-kafè. TAL-KOTBA jimmaterializza l-poeżija, il-kelma u l-qawwa tagħha. U l-kafè. Għala le.

TAL-KOTBA jitlaq minn hawn. Minn xewqa għal kafè, għal iljieli u jiem ta' qari u kitba, għal iktar nisa bi spirtu Ledukjan. Il-film tal-1989 (mhux se ngħid li ilu ħafna għax is-sena li twelidt fiha jien!) "Dead Poets Society" (dir. Peter Weir) jippreżenta din l-idea. Grupp żgħażaġħ jiltaqqgħu u jiddiskutu l-poeżija, saħansitra fi spazji strambi, gwidati minn għalliem li notorajment jitla' fuq l-imwejjed (le, mhux bi ħsiebni nitla' fuq imwejjed) u jagħmel affarijiet innokwi. L-importanti li l-poeżija tasal. Għax il-poeżija u l-letteratura mhux ta' waħedna, ta' għalina, ta' fina, ta' għal rasna. Hi wkoll ta' bejnieta u ta' madwarna.



M'għadux iż-żmien tat-torri tal-avorju li l-poeti jinqafu fih biex jistennew l-ideat jaqgħu minn fuq. Dan hu żmien ta' protesta li fih, li nħabbtu l-ideat, hi l-inqas haġa li nistgħu nagħmlu. Hu ż-żmien li nqumu fuq saqajna u ngħollu lehinna (klixè tal-biża' daqskemm hi reali). Hemm spazju bejn widnejna li jeħtieġ li nħaddmuh. U b'laqgħat ma' ħaddieħor nistgħu nagħmlu dan b'mod aktar effettiv. Kif jgħid John Keating fil-film "Dead Poets Society" jgħid x'jgħid ħaddieħor, il-kliem u l-ideat jistgħu jbiddu d-dinja.

TAL-KOTBA twieled b'parallelizmu ma' tal-ħaxix u tal-ħut u tal-laħam. Kostruzzjoni sintattika popolari sew li tintuza għal ħwienet jew nies li m'għandniex isem wieħed għalihom. Nistgħu maż-żmien noħolqu "kotbiera" jew "kotberija". Sadanittant, nibdew inħabbtu l-ideat. Nibdew niprotestaw dwar l-affarijiet li jfissru xi haġa; dwar l-ingustizzji u l-inugwaljanzi. Insiru l-kafè. Id-doża enerġija li tqajjem il-mistoqsijiet u tipproblemattizza kollox. Aħna pezza kwistjoni.