

# *A-Festi* Kultura u Identità

Rapport dwar is-Seminar Nazzjonali  
li ġie organizzat mis-Socjetà Mużikali Madonna tal-Ġilju

*31 ta' Marzu 2011*

Editur  
Charles J. Farrugia

# *Il-Festi* Kultura u Identità

Rapport dwar is-Seminar Nazzjonali  
li ġie organizzat fil-31 ta' Marzu 2011  
mis-Soċjetà Mużikali Madonna tal-Ġilju  
f'Montekristo Wine Vaults  
Hal Farrug

*editur*  
Charles J. Farrugia

Mqabba, Malta  
2011

# PROGRAMM

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 08:30 | Reġistrazzjoni   |
| 09:00 | Diskors ta' merħba mill-President tas-Socjetà s-Sur Teddy Farrugia                         |
| 09:05 | Diskors mill-Onor Dr Franco Debono<br>Assistent Parlamentari fl-Uffiċċju tal-Prim Ministru |
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| 09:25 | Preżentazzjoni mis-Sinjorina Christine M. Cassar<br>u Dr Mark Anthony Falzon               |
| 09:45 | Preżentazzjoni minn Dr Vicki Ann Cremona   |
| 10:05 | Waqfa għall-kafè   |
| 10:30 | Preżentazzjoni mill-Professur Jeremy Boissevain  |
| 10:50 | Mistoqsijiet u Diskussjoni   |
| 12:15 | Konklużjoni  |
| 12:30 | Tmiem  |

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## Introduzzjoni mill-Editur

Dan il-ktejjeb għandu l-iskop li jiġbor il-ħsibijiet espressi waqt is-Seminar Nazzjonali ‘Il-Festi: Kultura u Identità’ organizzat mis-Socjetà Mużikali Madonna tal-Ġilju fl-okkażjoni tal-mitt sena mit-twaqqif tagħha. Tnejn mid-diskorsi huma riprodotti kif saru fis-Seminar, waqt li dak ta’ Dr Vicki Ann Cremona hu f’forma aktar elaborata peress li din ħadet l-intrigu li tippreżenta x-xogħol tagħha f’forma aktar dettaljata u bl-Ingliz kif kien il-ħsieb tiegħi li joħrog dan ix-xogħol. L-oħra jn thallew fil-lingwa Maltija minħabba restrizzjonijiet ta’ żmien u mpenji mill-awturi. Il-kumplament ta’ din il-dahla hu d-diskors li jiena stess għamilt bħala introduzzjoni għas-Seminar.

Kulħadd jaqbel li l-festi Maltin (u b’festi qed nifhmu dawk b’rabta religjuža) huma parti intrinsika mill-ħajja tal-Maltin. Thobhom jew tobghħodhom qegħdin madwarna u ma tistax tinjorahom. Hu fatt ukoll li min igorr dwar il-festi ħafna drabi jilmenta minn aspetti partikolari aktar milli mill-festi kollha kemm huma. Ir-rabta tal-festi għandha għeruq religjuži. Fl-1938 George Percy Badger innota u kiteb hekk “*the principal recreations of the Maltese have, in general, some connection with their religious ceremonies*”.<sup>1</sup> Mas-snin, dawn il-festi thawru sew bil-baned, każini, armar, nar, u anke aspetti oħra filantropiċi u sportivi. Kien propju dan li ġegħelna nagħmlu għażla konxja ta’ kelliema. Ridna nħarsu lejn il-festa mill-aspett akademiku tagħha, filwaqt li nagħtu spazju lil kull min hu interessat li jiġi u jikkummenta mill-udjenza.

Element ieħor marbut mal-festi, u ħafna draba taħt l-attakk ta’ min idejquh il-festi hi l-pika. Din ma torbotx mal-festi biss però ma’ kull aspett tal-ħajja umana. Il-pika ma bdietx ilbieraħ. Meta wieħed jara x’kien jinkiteb fil-ġurnali Maltin fis-seklu dsatax marbut mal-pika bejn il-partitarji ta’ Nani u ta’ Bugeja wieħed iġib ghajnejh wara widnejh.<sup>2</sup> Dan qed ngħidu mhux għaliex dak li kien ħażin dakinhar b’xi mod sar tajjeb, jew għaliex għandna nimitaw il-ħażin, però aktar għaliex meta nitkellmu fuq il-festi llum inħoss li hemm nuqqas kbir ta’ esperjenza storika ta’ dak li ġara fil-passat u li hu importanti biex nifhmu l-preżent.

Ir-rabta religjuža ma tistax ma tingħatax l-importanza mistħoqqa. Id-devozzjoni lejn il-qaddisin hi f’demmna. Xhieda tinsab fuq l-eluf ta’ ismijiet ta’ djar, ta’ ismijiet ta’ nies għal qaddisin jew il-Madonna, ta’ ismijiet fuq trakkijiet, u qabel ma fi ftit ieħor tasal l-ARRIVA, anke fuq trakkijiet tal-linja. Din il-linja ta’ ħsieb hi riflessa wkoll fil-lingwa tagħna. Naħseb kulħadd sema’ bil-qawl, ‘Mingħajr qaddisin ma titlax il-genna’.

<sup>1</sup> Percy Badger, G. (1838), *Description of Malta and Gozo*, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> Uħud minn dawn l-ittri huma riprodotti fix-xogħol preżentat minni lill-Universită ta’ Malta għal-grad ta’ Maġisteru fl-Arti fl-1998 bl-isem ‘*Socio-Political and Economic Aspects in the History of Religious Festa Groups in Malta 1890-1940*’. B’mod partikolari tispikka l-ittra bl-isem ‘A Trotto Maijali!!!’ fil-ġurnal *Il-Verità*, 13 ta’ Diċembru 1913. L-ittra f’forma ta’ taqbila b’għoxrin strofa jżeblagħ il-mawriet tal-Banda La Vallette barra minn Malta u tuża kliem bħal “Ma nistax nifhem – chem bakghou lura, Il partitarj – ta La Vallette, Jemmnu daun collo – cull ma igħeidulhom. Mhux ked iservu – hlief ghazz-zuffiet: Seu chien kalilhom, Ghax uisk balali, il partit tagħna TROTTO MAIJALI!”.

Pietru Pawl Castagna jitfa' importanza fuq ir-rwol li l-Gran Mastru de Rohan kellhu biex jittrasforma l-festi kemm jista' jkun lejn attivitajiet ta' divertiment bħala strategija politika biex il-poplu jiddeverti aktar u jnaqqas it-tgergir.<sup>3</sup> Dan id-dettall jindika kemm-il političi anke fi żmien il-Kavallieri u l-Ingliżi użaw il-festi bħala arma politika. Hu għalhekk diffiċli li xi ħadd fid-dinja tal-lum jiddiskuti l-festi u jgħid li dawn huma purament reliġjuži. Filwaqt li naqbel ma' dawk li bħad-direttur Spiritwali tagħna jsostnu li l-festa tibda mill-knisja u tispiċċa fil-knisja', dan ma jnaqqas xejn minn dak kollu estern li llum hu parti mill-kultura u l-identità tal-festi Maltin.

Hemm ukoll l-element ekonomiku li wieħed ma jistax jifred mill-festi. Hemm eluf kbar ta' ewros investiti fil-festi. Mal-festi jaqilgħu l-għixien mhux biss tal-gabbani però kull min is-sena kollha jforni prodotti u servizzi lill-każini. L-element kummerċjali ma bediex ilbieraħ lanqas. Mir-riċerka tiegħi sibt kaži fejn kmieni fl-1854 Maltin kien qed igergru li l-baned tas-Servizzi qed itellfuhom il-flus.<sup>4</sup> Fl-1862, 27 daqqaqa tat-toroq imniżżla fuq Strada San Domenico kitbu lill-Gvernatur Ingliż jilmentaw dwar dan. Qalu hekk:

*The Royal Malta Fencibles are permitted to attend and play at all festivals, marriages, christenings, arrivals of passengers and other occasions of recreations; men by the Crown, paid, fed, clothed, instructed also found with instruments and music, and this to the detriment of unfortunate blind individuals who have no other means of subsistence.*

Din is-silta torbot id-daqq tal-mužika mal-festi ta' kull tip u fuq kollox mal-ghixien ta' kuljum tan-nies. F'din il-komplexità kollha nistgħu naraw il-festi anke llum il-ġurnata. Il-mezzi nbidlu, l-bżonnijiet u l-istili ta' ħajja nbidlu, però n-nies baqgħu umani bħal dejjem.

Hafna mill-aspetti li semmejt ser joħorgu mit-temi li ser jiddiskutu l-kelliema tagħna. Mhux ser inkopru kull aspett tal-festa għax mhux possibbli. Għalhekk wara, fid-diskussjoni kull wieħed minnkom jista' jelabora jew isaqsi dak li jrid. Ma nixtiequ li s-seminar ta' dalgħodu jinbidel f'konsulta medika dwar il-festi. Dan peress li konsulta medika issir fuq pazjent marid, li ma nħossux li hu l-każ tal-festi. Il-festi huma b'saħħithom ħafna, u huma xi individwi li bl-aġir tagħhom itappnu l-ħidma tal-kotra. F'dan l-ispirtu nixtiequ li l-attivitā ta' dalgħodu tiċċelebra l-festi, bit-tajjeb u l-ħażin tagħhom bħal f'kull ħaġa fid-dinja.

#### **Nota:**

*Id-diskussjoni fl-ahħar tal-ktejjeb hi kemm jista jkun fidila lejn ir-rekording li sar fil-post. Il-bidliet li saru mill-editur kien qed fuq talba tal-persuna li tkellmet jew inkella biex titneħħha repetizzjoni li wieħed jaċċetta f'diskors mhux imħejji iżda mhux f'test pubblikat.*

<sup>3</sup> Skont Castagna de Rohan kien qed juža l-festi biex inessi d-dwejjaq tal-poplu u jaljina lin-nies. Kien anke jżur l-irħula fil-ġranet tal-festa sabiex joffri appoġġ morali u ta' patronaġġ. Fit-12 ta' Mejju 1776 hu żar Haż-Żebbuġ għal festa ta' San Filep u sena wara ta' ismu lil dan ir-raħal issa bħala Citta' Rohan. Dwar de Rohan u Haż-Żebbuġ ara Galea, M. (1996), *Grand Master Emanuel de Rohan 1775-1797*, p. xi.

<sup>4</sup> Arkivju Nazzjonali, CSG02/5509/1891.



## Nota Bijografika

Charles J. Farrugia huwa gradwat mid-Dipartiment tal-Istorja tal-Università ta' Malta. Ghal Baċċellerat tiegħu fl-1996 huwa ppreżenta t-teżi *Rural Village Politics in Malta: the case of Mqabba 1890-1940* filwaqt li għal-Lawrja tal-Maġisteru fl-1998 huwa ppreżenta l-istudju *Socio-Political and Economic Aspects in the History of Religious Festa Groups in Malta 1890-1940*. Kien promutur tal-istudju tal-istorja tal-Imqabba fuq baži professjoni bil-publikazzjoni tiegħu *Tal-Ġilju: Il-Banda u s-Socjetà fl-Imqabba fl-1995*, u l-idejar u editjar tal-ktieb *L-Imqabba mal-medda taż-żmien fl-1998*, liema pubblikazzjoni ġiet mogħtija l-premju ghall-aħjar riċerka tal-Premju Letterarju. Wara kisba ta' żewġ lawrji oħra fl-arkivistika minn Universitajiet Inglizi, fl-2005 nhatar bħala l-ewwel Arkivista Nazzjonali, kariga li għadu jokkupa sal-lum. Fl-2008 huwa kkordina 27 awtur f'publikazzjoni akademika *Guardians of Memory: essays in remembrance of Hella Jean Bartolo Winston*. F'Novembru 2009 organizza l-konferenza Internazzjonali annwali tal-arkivisti li ġabet Malta 250 arkivist mid-dinja kollha. Huwa lettur fl-Università ta' Malta, mentor fl-Università ta' Dundee u student għad-dottorat fl-Università ta' Aberystwyth. Jokkupa l-kariga wkoll ta' President tal-Assocjazzjoni tal-Arkivisti u Manigħi ta' Rekords tal-Commonwealth.



*Il-panel ta' kelliema fis-seminar kompost minn Charles Farrugia, Christine Cassar, Jeremy Boissevain u Vicki Ann Cremona*

# Diskors ta' merħba mis-Sur Teddy Farrugia

## President tas-Socjetà Mużikali Madonna tal-Ġilju

L-Għodwa t-tajba lil kulħadd u nibda billi nirringrażza lilkom ilkoll li dalgħodu għażi lu tilqgħu l-istedina tagħna għal dan in-nofstanhar ta' diskussjoni.

Dan is-seminar għandu aktar minn skop wieħed. Qegħdin propju f'sena li tfakkarr l-ewwel ġentinarju mit-twaqqif ta' Circolo Pio X li kellu l-ghan li joħloq għaqda li tipprotegi l-interessi tal-Imqabbin devoti lejn il-Madonna taħt it-titlu tal-Ġilju. Hu interessanti li l-festa tal-Madonna tal-Ġilju kienet ilha ssir tal-anqas mill-1772. Dakinhar twaqqfet il-Fratellanza tal-Immakulata Kunċizzjoni fil-knisja tal-Imqabba. Peress li fl-istatut kien hemm li din torganizza żewġ festi fis-sena – tal-Ġilju u l-Kunċizzjoni, inħolqot struttura li baqgħet topera hekk sal-lum. Però fil-bidu tas-seklu għoxrin kien hemm taqlib kbir u ntriċċi kbar fir-raħal. Dan wassal għal qasmiet u c-Circolo Pio X kien biss formalità ta' devozzjoni ta' sekli. Biex infakkru dan kollu ridna li fost il-ħafna attivitajiet li jiċċelebraw għeluq il-mitt sena mit-twaqqif tas-Socjetà nenfasizzaw il-kultura. Din tal-lum hi attivitā purament kulturali. Tagħti c-ċans lid-dilettanti li jiltaqgħu mal-akkademiċi. Tagħtina c-ċans li naħsbu u nırriflettu dwar dak li ħafna drabi ma naħsbux dwaru għaliex hu tant parti minn ħajnejha.

L-għażla tal-kelliema saret bil-ħsieb. Hemm taħlita ta' professjonisti ta' etajiet u sess differenti, u b'apertura ta' tagħlim akademiku minn Malta u barra. Irnexxielna nikkonvinċu lil-veteran tal-istudji tal-festi l-Professur Boissemain biex jonorana bil-preżenza u *paper* tiegħu. Ma ridniex li jkollna diskussjoni li tinkludi biss lilna li naħdmu fil-festi għaliex ħafna drabi ningħalqu bejn erba' ħitan u nippritkaw għal min hu konvertit digħi. Ridna naraw kif is-Socjetà ingenerali thares lejn il-festi. Fl-istess ħin ma ħallejna barra lil ħadd u rreklamajna fuq kull mezz tal-medja li laqagħna biex min irid jiġi u jagħti sehemu jkun jista' jagħmel dan.

Nixtieq nirringrażza lis-Sur Charles Farrugia li identifika l-kelliema, u ser ikun qed imexxi din id-diskussjoni. Wara l-organizzazzjoni kien hemm il-Kummissjoni Ċentinarju u diversi soċċi ħabrieka. Nirringrażza lid-dirigenti tal-Montekristo Wine Vaults li għenu bl-allokazzjoni ta' din is-sala u lil diversi sponsors oħra li tawna appoġġ. Hajr ukoll lis-Segretarju Parlamentari għall-Konsumatur, Kunsilli Lokali u Djalogu Pubbliku Dr Chris Said li għen fl-isponsorship ta' dan is-Seminar, u lill-Onorevoli Franco Debono li fl-assenza ta' Dr Said ser ikun qed jinawgħura dan is-Seminar. Hajr ukoll imur għall-kelliema li għażlu li jiddedikaw tant ħin fir-riċerka li llum ser jaqsmu magħna. Jiena nawgħura diskussjoni ta' livell li tkompli tagħmel unur u ssebbah il-festi Maltin li huma espressjoni ta' kultura u identità Maltija.

Filwaqt li mill-ġdid nirringrażżjakom li ġejtu, nistieden issa lil Dr Franco Debono, Assistent Parlamentari fl-Ufficċju tal-Prim Ministru sabiex jinawgħura dan is-seminar.

## **Diskors mill-Onor. Dr Franco Debono**

### Assistent Parlamentari fis-Segretarjat tal-Kunsilli Lokali u Konsultazzjoni Pubblika

Meta gejt mistieden nindirizza din il-konferenza u tajt ħarsa lejn il-programm u lejn it-temi li se jiġu diskussi, ammirajt is-sens ta' inizjattiva tal-organizzaturi.

Li soċjetà mužikali, bħalma hi s-Soċjetà Madonna tal-Ġilju tal-Imqabba, tiddeċiedi li tieqaf ftit mir-rutina tagħha u tiddiskuti l-festa Maltija bħala parti mill-identità nazzjonali tagħna, hi inizjattiva li wieħed ma jistax ma jfaħħarx.

Soċjetà mužikali titwaqqaf għal diversi għanijiet. Hemm, qabel kollox, il-ħeġġa li jkun hemm iż-żejjed sens ta' għaqda fil-lokalită, bi grupp ta' nies, ħafna drabi żgħażaq, jingħaqdu flimkien u joħolqu mix-xejn soċjetà li ssebba, sena wara l-oħra, il-festa tal-lokalită. Hemm, bħal f'kull aspett tal-festa Maltija, element ta' fidi, li soċjetà tagħti gieħ lill-patrun jew patruna tar-rahal jew belt. Hemm ukoll l-għan li fil-lokalită jkollok għaqda li tgħalleml, b'xejn, il-mužika lill-allievi u, f'ħafna kaži, anke toffrīlhom l-istrumenti b'xejn. Hemm is-sens ta' dixxiplina, fi struttura li biex tirnexxi trid tkun bilfors organizzata, b'kumitat li jiľtaqa' regolarment, lezzjonijiet, kunċerti u elf biċċa xogħol li trid issir biex soċjetà bħal din tibqa' tikber sena wara l-oħra.

U tikber żgur li qiegħda din is-soċjetà, li din is-sena qed tiċċelebra annivserarju importanti – il-100 sena mit-twaqqif tagħha – xhieda tad-dedikazzjoni ta' mijiet ta' persuni li tul dawn il-mitt sena taw ġinhom u l-enerġija tagħhom għal dan il-għan. Ċentinarju huwa, minnu nnifsu, xhieda ta' serjetà, ta' dixxiplina, ta' sostenibbiltà u ta' sens ta' għaqda u ħsieb fit-tul.

Huwa floku li bħala soċjetà li tilħaq il-qofol tagħha fil-festa Maltija, tlaqqajna biex niddiskutu l-festa tagħna fi sfond kulturali wiesa'. Hija fil-festa tradizzjonali Maltija li joħroġ fil-bera il-karattru Malti – is-sens ta' fidi, is-sens ta' għaqda, il-mod kif nifirħu bħala komunità, il-mod kif niċċelebraw, kif nieklu, kif nuru l-ferħ tagħna. Iżda anke l-mod kif inħobbu nimpikaw mal-ġirien, il-mod kif festa tkun trid tispikka minn dawk ta' madwarha u allura jidħol il-karattru Malti li ma jaqtax qalbu u jpoġġi quddiemu sfidi akbar minn tas-sena ta' qabel.

Huwa għalhekk li meta xi ħadd ikun irid jiskopri l-identità partikolari ta' lokalită għandu jżurha fil-festa, meta r-raħal jew belt tinbidel fi kważi teatru ħaj b'kulħadd iwettaq – bl-aqwa mod – ir-rwol tiegħu taħbi id-direzzjoni ta' numru żgħir ta' nies li jmexxu aspetti differenti tal-festa – mill-armar, il-briju, in-nar, il-banda, sal-attivitajiet kollha tal-knisja.

Bħal kull ħaġa oħra ħajja, anke l-festa tradizzjonali Maltija qed tinbidel ftit ftit. Kif jinbidlu d-drawwiet, kif qed tinbidel il-lingwa, kif qed jinbidlu l-modi ta' għajxien. Jekk inqabblu l-festi tal-lum ma' dawk ta' ħamsin sena ilu naraw differenzi kbar. Mhux biss qed jintefqu iż-żejjed flus iż-żda kollox qed jinħadem b'mod differenti. Illum għandek il-billboards imxerrdin ma' Malta jirreklamaw il-festi l-kbar, għandek iż-żgħażaq, jaraw li l-festa tiġi *streamed* anke *online* għall-emigrant u għal dawk li

jgawduha fizikament ma jistgħux. Għandek il-ħolqien ta' ħafna radjijiet tal-komunità li qed iservu biex ħafna żgħażagħ isibu pjattaforma fejn juru t-talenti tagħhom.

U tqum, ovvjament, id-domanda ta' kemm għandna naraw li dak li jagħmel il-festa tradizzjonali Maltija speċjali jinżamm u jiġi mgħoddi lill-ġenerazzjonijiet futuri kemm jista' jkun intatt.

Il-futur tal-festa tradizzjonali Maltija huwa suġġett li ħafna minna l-Maltin, u persważ aħna kollha li qegħdin hawn, għandna għal qalbna. Ta' spiss nisimgħu b'diskussionijiet li jistaqsu jekk wasalx iż-żmien li l-festa tiġi ridimensjonata. L-awtoritajiet tal-knisja ta' spiss isemmu l-ħtieġa li l-festa tkun tirrifletti iż-żejjed l-ispiritwalit. Incidenti sfortunati li qed jiġru iż-żejjed ta' spiss fi kmamar tan-nar qed iġiegħlu lil ħafna jistaqsu dwar x'shem għandu l-logħob tan-nar fil-festa Maltija. Għaqdiet tas-saħħha jappellaw f'kull staġun tal-festa għal iż-żejjed responsabbiltà fil-festi, l-iż-żejjed fejn jidħol ix-xorb. Iżda fl-istess waqt naraw li l-festa tiġbor flimkien żgħażagħ biex jaħdmu fil-banda jew fl-armar jew fil-knisja, u li hemm isibu skop u lok biex juru t-talenti tagħhom li altrimenti jistgħu ma jsibu qatt. Inħarsu madwarna u naraw li l-aqwa artisti li għandna f'pajjiżna bdew jesperimentaw bit-talent tagħhom fil-festa tar-raħal jew belt tagħhom.

X'inhu r-riżultat ta' dan kollu fuq il-festa Maltija? X'shem għandhom it-tfal li għada pitgħada sejkunu huma l-organizzaturi tal-festi tagħna? Kemm huma sostenibbli l-festi bil-mod kif isiru llum?

Persważ li Dr Mark Anthony Falzon, Christine Cassar, l-Eċċellenza tagħha Vicki Ann Cremona, u l-Professur Jeremy Boissevain se jitfġi dawl partikolari fuq il-festi tagħna u se jagħmlu minn din il-konferenza okkażjoni importanti fit-tiftix kontinwu tagħna għall-identità.

Jekk tippermettuli, qabel nagħlaq, ngħaddi suġġeriment żgħir, li forsi diġà ġie kkunsidrat. Ikun sabiħ jekk id-dokumenti li se jitressqu waqt din il-konferenza jingħabru flimkien fi ktejjeb, li appartu li jibqa' ta' tifkira, ikun ta' użu siewi għal kull min irid jitgħallek iż-żejjed dwar il-festa Maltija bħala simbolu tal-identità tagħna.

Nirringrazza mill-qalb lill-organizzaturi. Nifirħilhom mill-ġdid ta' din l-inizjattiva. U fuq kollo nifraħ lis-Soċjetà Mużikali Madonna tal-Ġilju fl-okkażjoni tal-ewwel centinarju tagħha. Persważ li bid-dedikazzjoni li mmarkat l-ewwel centinarju, il-ġenerazzjonijiet futuri għad jimmarkaw oħrajn.



*L-udjenza numeruża waqt is-seminar*

# M'hemmx festa bla nar: Murtali, ħsejjes, u t-tifsira tagħhom fil-festa Maltija

Mark-Anthony Falzon u Christine M. Cassar

F'editorjal riċenti f'magazin maħruġ mill-Kullegg tal-Kappillani Maltin, l-awtur (hu nnifsu qassis) argumenta li mhux minnu li n-nar hu element essenzjali tal-festa; għall-kuntlarju, l-element tal-periklu intrinsiku tan-nar jhedded li jħassar il-pjaċir tal-istess festa. L-editorjal ma ħarabx l-attenzjoni tad-dilettanti u ġibed ammont ta' kummenti fil-medja. Dan għaliex azzarda-jmur kontra prinċipju kardinali li jissemma spiss ħafna u li rari jiġi sfidat. L-ewwel ħaġa lid-dilettanti tan-nar, u d-dilettanti tal-festi ingenerali, jgħidulek, hi li 'm'hemmx festa bla nar'. Dak li jkunu jridu jfissru mhuwiex li n-nar 'iżid' xi ħaġa mal-festa, iżda li n-nar hu parti intrinsika u li ma tistax tisseparah mill-festa.

Dan li ġej hu r-riżultat ta' riċerka li għamilna, jew aħjar qed nagħmlu, jien u l-kolleġa tiegħi Mark-Anthony Falzon. Peress li l-qasam tagħna huwa l-antropologija, ibbażajna din ir-riċerka fuq dak li aħna nsejħulu 'fieldwork'. Bażikament dan ifisser li minflok xi stħarrig bit-telefon jew xi kwestjonarju fejn wieħed jimmarka Iva jew Le, aħna nippreferu niltaqgħu man-nies kemm jista' jkun fil-ħajja tagħhom ta' kuljum u nippuvaw ukoll ngħixu l-esperjenzi li jgħixu huma. Pereżempju, biex nifħmu aħjar x'iħossu d-dilettanti meta jiġri xi incident, f'Awwissu li għaddha attendejna l-funeral ta' Mario Dimech fil-Mosta. Għalkemm ma konniex nafuh xorta waħda ħassejna s-sens ta' diqa u xokk li ħassew sħabu li għaddew tant sigħat miegħu fil-kamra tan-nar.

Lura għad-domanda taħraq tal-lum. Aħna naħsbu li d-dilettanti fil-fatt għandhom raġun li festa bla nar mhix proprja festa kif nafuha. Jiġifieri naħsbu, biex ngħiduha mill-ewwel, li m'hemmx festa bla nar. Dan ngħiduh a baži ta' mill-inqas ħames aspetti.

L-ewwel. Il-festa kif nafuha hi esperjenza li bl-Ingliz ngħidulha 'multi-sensory', jiġifieri magħmula minn sensazzjonijiet differenti (id-dehra, il-ħoss, ix-xamm, eċċ.). Il-ħoss fil-fatt għandu sehem importanti daqs l-armar fit-toroq u l-fid-did fil-knejjes. Għandek il-ħoss partikolari tal-qniepen, pereżempju, li fi żmien il-festa jkun speċjali. Għandek ukoll il-ħoss tal-banda, il-geġwiġija tal-folol, u l-ghajjajt ta' waqt il-marċi u ta' meta l-vara tiddaħħal lura fil-knisja. Meta ngħidu 'briju' fil-fatt inkunu qed infissru wkoll dawn il-ħsejjes li jitħalltu flimkien b'mod kumpless u uniku. Inkwantu għan-nar, l-argument jeħodna għar-rabta diretta mal-festa li għandu n-nar fil-kuntest lokali. Meta wieħed jisma' l-murtali, nistgħu ngħidu li wieħed ikun qed jisma' l-festa fil-fatt. Dan jispjega wkoll il-fatt li l-ħoss tan-nar 'il barra mill-istaġun tal-festi, jew murtal fil-viċin barra żmien il-festa tar-raħhal, jistona u jinstema' stramb.

Ha nsahħu l-punt permezz ta' żewġ eżempji minn pajjiżi mbiegħda. Fil-ktieb tiegħu *Sound and sentiment: Birds, weeping, poetics and song in Kaluli expression, 1982*, l-antropologu Feld jispjega kif għal xi ħadd li mhux midħla, il-foresta tropikal tal-Papua New Guinea tīġi esperjenzata bħala 'ħajt enorġi ta' geġwiġija u ħsejjes strambi'. Għan-nies tat-tribu tal-Kaluli, iżda, li jitwieldu u jitrabbew fil-foresta, dan il-ħoss ifisser

xort'oħra. Tant hu hekk, li jitgħallmu jidentifikaw u jilmħu speċi partikolari ta' għasafar mill-mod kif l-ghana tagħhom ‘tintrefa’ minn dik li tinstema’ bħala gegwiegħija. Biex niftieħmu bl-użu ta’ eżempju lokali, kull min hu dilettant tal-insib jaf li nassab iqatta ġranet sħaħ imdawwar b’kakofonija ta’ hsejjes u ghana ġejjin mill-gabbjetti tal-ghajjaj. Għal min ma jifhimx din hi gegwiegħija sħiħa. Imma nassab tajjeb jimmarka mill-ewwel il-ħoss ta’ għasfur tal-passa. Il-kelma li jużaw in-nassaba hi ‘thoss’; nassab tal-affari tiegħu jitgħallem iħoss (iktar milli jisma’ fis-sens dejjaq) l-ambjent li jgħix u jonsob fih. It-tieni eżempju barrani jagħti-hulna Oostermaan, li jiġi kif għall-ewwel li mar jgħix fil-favelas (qishom bliet magħmula minn djar x’aktarx fgar u ffullati) tal-Brazil, kien jisma’ sparar li kien jaħsbu tiri. Maż-żmien tgħallem li dan kien fil-fatt sparar ta’ murtali żgħar biex b'mod strategiku jwiddeb lin-nies tal-post li ġejjin il-pulizija. Il-punt hu li f’Malta, wieħed jitgħallem ‘jisma’ u ‘jhoss’ in-nar għall-kontenut kulturali tiegħu, jiġifieri l-esperjenza tal-festa. Għalhekk għedna li meta tisma’ n-nar, fil-fatt tkun qed tisma’ l-festa. Bħal meta ngħidu aħna tisma’ bieb jistabat – ma tismax tisbita imma tisma’ bieb jinstabat, anke jekk ma tkun qed tarah.

It-tieni rabta bejn il-festa u n-nar ġejja mill-fatt li n-nar jirbombja u għandu qawwa penetranti ferm aktar minn hsejjes oħra, pereżempju d-daqqa tal-qniepen. Hu kważi impossibbli li taqta’ barra l-ħoss tiegħu. Meta għedna li n-nar jinhass, konna qed nifħmu ukoll li l-murtali – specjalment dawk qawwija li intom issibuhom ‘tal-bomba’, thosshom jheżżuk u dak kollu ta’ madwarek. Il-ħoss tal-bomba jaqtgħek minn ġewwa, ngħidu. F’dan is-sens mela, in-nar iwassal il-festa lill-individwu b'mod li l-ebda aspett ieħor tal-festa ma jista’ jimita. Il-ħoss u l-vibrazzjoni jippenetraw l-elementi arkitettoniči u kollettivi (il-bini, biex ngħiduha b'mod sempliċi) u jwasslu l-esperjenza tal-festa lill-individwu, b'mod fiziku u intimu – litteralment billi jmissu lill-ġisem ta’ dak li jkun.

La qed nitkellmu fuq il-ġisem tal-individwu, interessanti ngħidu li l-produzzjoni tan-nar issir ukoll parti intrinsika mill-persuna tad-dilettant. Ma naħsibx li nissorprendukom jekk ngħidulkom li ħafna min-nies li intervistajna spjegaw in-nar b'ġesti bl-idejn u l-wiċċ u hsejjes li jgiegħluk tara n-nar, kif ukoll bi kliem bħal ‘boom’, ‘bam’, ‘shhhh’, ‘paħħ’ u hsejjes oħra. Biex wieħed jiġi s-sekwenza partikulari fi spettaklu jitlob li wieħed juža ammont ta’ hsejjes u ġesti li jiffiguraw it-tipi differenti ta’ nar. F’dan is-sens, kemm-il process tal-produzzjoni (min-naħha tad-dilettant, jiġifieri) kif ukoll l-impatt (min-naħha ta’ min jisma’) jinhassu mill-qrib, bħala parti mill-persuna. U x’inhi festa jekk mhux esperjenza li tinvolvi l-bniedem kollu kemm hu?

It-tielet argument li jorbot in-nar mal-festa hu dak li, kif tafu intom aħjar minna, festa ta’ stoffa hija festa li fiha struttura maħsuba, speċi ta’ sekwenza ta’ mumenti importanti. F’festa kif jixraq, kollox għandu l-ħin u l-waqt preċiż tiegħu – u hawn tidħol ukoll il-ħila tad-dilettanti. In-nar hu wieħed mill-elementi importanti li jistruttura u jagħti sekwenza lill-festa. Pereżempju, l-ħruġ tal-vara hu marbut mal-ħruq ta’ kaxxa infernali, il-ħarqa l-kbira ssir lejlet il-festa, u l-bqija. Meta n-nies tar-raħal jisimghu n-nar u anke t-tip u l-kobor tiegħu, jorbtuh ma’ mumenti speċjali tal-festa; wieħed jista’ jisma’ l-bidu tal-marċ mingħajr ma jisma’ l-banda, għax jinħarqu xi murtali jew xi musketterija. In-nar għalhekk jipprovd kemm ir-ritmu kif ukoll il-korjografija tal-

festa. Mela festa bla nar hi fost l-oħrajn waħda parzjalment mejta għax tilfet ingredjent ewljeni li jagħtina ritmu. Jekk forsi qed ninstemgħu nesageraw, nistednukom tistħajlu kemm huma importanti r-ritmi bħala element ta' kull ritwal li jeżisti. X'inhi quddiesa mingħajr liturgija strutturata, mingħajr il-kant u l-ħoss tal-qniepen li jgħidulna meta bdiet, meta spicċat, meta waslet il-konsagrazzjoni, u l-bqja?

Niġu għar-raba' element, il-famuża pika li tagħti tant energija lill-festi Maltin – u li tant tat toghma lill-kitba u r-riċerka ta' Jeremy Boissevain. Fi kliem sempliċi, peress li l-produzzjoni tan-nar hi sforz kollettiv (jekk xejn anke minħabba li kollox jiddependi fuq il-ġbir tal-flus mill-pubbliku), in-nar ifisser ukoll kejl ta' kemm-il komunità hi kapaċi taħdem flimkien għal għan kollettiv u tiġbed ħabel wieħed. Barra minn hekk, id-dilettanti kemm minn inħawi oħra kif ukoll tal-post (speċjalment jekk ikunu fuq ix-xaqliba l-oħra, biex niftieħmu!) ikej lu l-ħarqa kemm mill-aspett ta' kwantità u kwalitā. Il-kwantità hi xhieda ta' kemm-il komunità kapaċi taħdem fi spiritu ta' għaqda u tiġbor għall-festa, u l-kwalitā hi xhieda tal-ħila u l-kapaċità teknika tad-dilettanti.

Mhux il-mument nidħlu f'dettalji tekniċi però min ikun dilettant mustaċċun ikellmek b'lingwaġġ rikk u tekniku fuq murtali bl-imsielet, blalen, u elf tip ieħor. Fuq xi grokk jew tnejn jew għaxra, id-dilettanti kapaċi jqattgħu sīħat shah ikantaw taqbiliet li jniggju lir-rivali tagħhom – kif thobbu tgħidu intom, ‘magħna ma tagħmlu xejn’ (biex nibqgħu fuq verżjoni edukata). Jidher ukoll li d-dilettanti malajr feħmu l-kunċett tal-Web 2.0 u ħafna qed japplawdjaw biċċiet ta' filmati tan-nar – ħafna drabi akkumpanjati b'mużika magħżu l-pika tal-festa. Bħal elementi oħra, in-nar sar parti mill-politika (mhux politika ħamra jew blu biex niftieħmu, imma tat-tip lokali) tal-festa Maltija. Kif tafu, fuq dan l-aspett ta' politika ta kontribut kbir Boissevain.

Il-ħames argument li nixtiequ nressqu hu dak li n-nar jwessa' l-ispażju tal-festa, b'mod impressjonanti. Għalkemm ix-xogħlijiet antropoloġiči kemm ta' Boissevain kif ukoll ta' Mitchell it-tnejn isemmu l-firxa wiesgħa ta' spazji varji li fihom isseħħ il-festa Maltija (ngħidu aħna dak centrali tal-pjazza u speċjalment iz-zuntier, spazji passaġġi bħal ma' huma t-toroq imżejnin mnejn tgħaddi l-purċissjoni, l-ispażji aktar intimi tad-djar tan-nies imżejna għall-okkażjoni, u l-bqja), sa issa ma hemm l-ebda studju li jħares esklussivament lejn il-kunċett tal-festa u l-ispażji. Nixtiequ niproponulkom li n-nar hu mill-aktar sinifikattiv f'dan l-aspett. Dan għaliex in-nar ‘jwassal’, jiġifieri jivvjaġġa bl-aktar mod mexxej għal diversi mili fil-madwar u hu ferm aktar diffiċli tikkontrollah u tirrestrinġih minn kwalunkwe element ieħor. Mela permezz tal-ħoss tan-nar, il-festa titwessa' u tinfirex fuq spazju ħafna ikbar minn dak limitat tal-lokalitā fejn propjament issir. Il-festa twassal daqs kemm iwassal il-ħoss tan-nar, biex inpoġġuha mod ieħor.

Jista' jkun li dan jistema' kemxejn kontradittorju. Fuq naħha l-festa għandha skop lokali – tieċċelebra l-qaddis fi ħdan belt jew raħal, issir f'dak il-post, u għandha sinifikat speċjali ‘għan-nies tal-post’ (qed nużaw din l-espressjoni għaliex ma rridux infissru biss l-abitanti, imma dawk in-nies li jħossu rabta ma dak il-post għaliex huma jew il-familja tagħhom għandhom għeruq f'dak il-post). Min-naħha l-oħra qed ngħidu li l-festa qed tifrex l-operat tagħha 'l barra mill-konfini lokali permezz tal-element tal-

ħoss. Peress li Malta hi tant żgħira, dan ifisser li l-ħoss tan-nar jifrex ma nħawi kbar tal-pajjiż kollhu. Meta n-nies jisimghu n-nar, bla ma jridu jsaqsu ‘Din il-festa ta’ fejn hi?’ Fl-iljieli sajfin, hu possibbli li wieħed iħares lejn is-sema u jaqra fiha l-lokalità u l-esperjenzi li tkun għaddejja minnhom mill-isparar u l-ħsejjes li jkun hemm. Inżidu nargumentaw, li f’dan il-kuntest il-gżira kollha ssir speċi ta’ pjattaforma li fuqha jiddandnu l-festi lokali bħala avvenimenti anke nazzjonali. In-nar mela hu element importanti li jagħti lill-festa Maltija din il-kapaċità affaxxinanti li tkun lokali u mifruxa fl-istess ħin.



*Nar tal-art fl-Imqabba fl-1970, ħames xhur biss wara tragedja bin-nar*

## Ideat differenti

S’issa l-argument tagħna kien li m’hemmx festa mingħajr il-ħoss tan-nar. Jeħtieġ issa nkunu naqra inqas ottimisti. Il-fatt hu li għal ħafna nies f’Malta n-nar hu meqjus bħala inkonvenjent, jew anke forma ta’ vjolenza. Fl-Ingliz niddistingwu bejn ‘ħoss’ bħala ‘sound’ u ‘ħoss’ bħala ‘noise’. Sintendi *sound* hu ħoss li ġeneralment jogħġibok, *noise* hu ħoss li jdejqek – biċċa mužika sabiħa hi *sound*, pereżempju, filwaqt li kompressur hu *noise*. X’aktarx li fil-Malti l-kliem ekwivalenti huma ‘ħoss’ għal *sound* u ‘storbju’ għal *noise*. Nimmaġinaw li għalikom – u għalina wkoll fil-verità, specjalment wara li tgħallimna napprezzaw in-namra tagħkom – in-nar huwa ħoss. Għal ħafna però, huwa storbju. U hawnhekk nibdew ġejjin bil-banda.

Hu fatt li l-logħob tan-nar hu wieħed mis-suġġetti l-aktar dibattuti f' Malta. Fl-eqqel tal-istaġun tal-festi, u aktar u aktar wara xi tragedja bin-nar, il-gazzetti u radju u t-televixin ifuru b'argumenti dwar kemm hu aċċettabli n-nar. Ittra riċenti f'*The Sunday Times* tiġbor fiha ħafna minn din il-kritika, li ħafna drabi tirrepeti l-istess argumenti. Kif maqluba għall-Malti:

Naqbel bil-qawwa mal-kampanja tagħkom biex jitwaqqaf darba għal dejjem dan il-bombardament. Jien noqgħod f'żona mdawra b'irħula ppikati min jagħmel l-iktar storbju - Hal Lija, il-Mosta, in-Naxxar u l-Għargħur. Dawn kollha jibdew il-bombardament minn xi ħmistax qabel il-festa. Jaqbdu jaħarqu l-bombi ħin bla waqt u jtarrxuna bid-damdim ... ikollna nagħlilqu l-bibien u t-twiegħi f'dik is-sħana tas-sajf, forsi ntaffu xi ftit mill-istorbju ... ma nistax nifhem kif hawn nies li jogħġo bhom dan il-barbariżmu primitiv. Possibbli ma jindunawxi xi ħsara qed jagħmlu lilhom u lil ta' madwarhom?

Mhix l-intenzjoni tagħna li noqogħdu naraw min għandu raġun – naħsbu indunajtu s-simpatiji tagħna fejn qeqħdin. Minflok ser inħarsu – b'mod kemxejn arbitrarju, għax hemm ħafna iktar x'tgħid – lejn żewġ aspetti tan-nar: il-ġeneru (jiġifieri maskil jew femminil) u l-assocjazzjoni ma' ideat ta' moderazzjoni u modernità. Dawn jorbtu ma' jekk in-nar jiġix meqjus bħala ħoss jew storbju.

## Generu

Nibdew bi kwotazzjoni qasira minn intervista ma'dilettant:

M'hemmx nisa li jinteressahom jaħdmu n-nar. Insomma hemm waħdiet, u l-biċċa l-kbira għandhom il-licenzja imma ma jaħdmux. In-nar periklu ... ikollhom il-familja.

B'kollo f'Malta hawn 1500 dilettant registrati. Minnhom tlettak biss huma nisa. Dan juri biċ-ċar li n-nar hu d-dominju assolut tal-irġiel. U ngħiduha, fil-realtà kemm-il manifattura kif ukoll il-ħruq tan-nar isir kważi esklussivament mill-irġiel. Il-kmamar tan-nar kif ukoll l-ghelieqi minn fejn jinħaraq huma spazji maskili. Fil-fehma tagħna, dan it-twaħħid bejn nar u maskulinità, jestendi anke għat-territorju maħluq mill-ħoss. Fi kliem ieħor qed nissuġġerixxu li n-nar fil-kultura Maltija huwa meqjus bħala fenomenu essenzjalment maskili.

Id-dilettanti pereżempju jitkellmu dwar in-namra tagħhom għan-nar. Il-kelma namra tintuża għal diversi delizzji f'Malta imma l-aktar għall-kaċċa u l-insib, u għan-nar. In-namra hi meqjusa (mid-dilettanti) li tkun fid-demm u tgħaddi minn ġenerazzjoni għal oħra, predominantement fl-irġiel u permezz tal-irġiel (xi nannu, missier jew ziju pereżempju). In-namra twassal lill-irġiel li jissugraw ħajjitom u partijiet minn ġisimhom; twassal xi drabi biex jintilfu l-irjus sal-punt li wieħed ippoggi d-delizzju qabel l-istess interassi ta' familtu.

“Hi f’demmi”, qalilna wieħed dilettant, “ma nafx x’naqbad nagħmel kieku kelli nieqaf min-nar. Darba ppruvajt u wara ftit xhur kelli nibda nibla’ l-kalmanti. Bdejt intabbab u ma stajtx nissaporti. Vera li ridt nieqaf – ma riedtx ninkwieta aktar lill-mara – kienet tinkwieta ferm meta nkun hemm isfel u ninsa l-ħin u niddawwar. Ipprvajt, imma wara erba’ xhur ergajt waqajt mill-ġdid għan-nar”.

Il-fatt li n-nisa rari jaħdmu n-nar ma jfissirx li m'għandhomx sehem fil-process kollu. Hawnhekk l-istatistika taf tqarraq. In-nisa fil-fatt **huma** involuti – fl-organizzazzjoni tal-attivitàajiet għal ġbir ta' fondi, bħala parti mill-kumitat tan-nisa fi ħdan il-każin, eċċ. Jidhrilna wkoll li għandhom sehem simboliku ta' nisa u ommijiet li jsorfu. Jagħmlu hekk kemm għaliex joqogħdu d-dar jistennew u jinkwetaw dwar is-sigurtà ta' żwieġhom u uliedhom, u billi jieħdu sehem attiv fis-sogħba meta l-affarijiet imorru hażin. Jekk ir-riskju li taħdem in-nar hu assoċjat mal-maskulinità, l-istorja ma tkunx kompluta jekk ma nsemmux dan is-sehem importanti.

Minkejja dan kollu, jibqa' l-fatt li n-nar hu dominju tal-irġiel. Huma l-irġiel li jixtru l-proviżjon, iħalltu l-kulur (process meqjus bħala perikoluż), u li jqattgħu s-sigħat jiġru fl-ghelieqi mimlija ġamar u duħħan waqt il-ħarqa. Dan hu partikolarment relevanti għall-argument tagħna, għaliex il-ħoss isir estensjoni ta' din l-attività fizika. Dan hu għaliex il-ħoss hu fl-aħħar mill-aħħar estensjoni ta' din il-fizikalità. Hu għalhekk li qed nargumentaw li, bħala ħoss, in-nar huwa b'mod ċar u dirett wieħed maskili.

Sa issa tkellimna dwar il-ħoss ġenerat mill-irġiel. X'ngħidu dwar l-istorju li joħolqu? X'inhi r-relazzjoni bejn il-ġeneru, in-nar u l-politika tal-ħoss? Bħala punt tat-tluq nistgħu ngħidu li l-maskulinità nnifisha hi meqjusa f'diversi gradi li jiffurmaw speċi ta' ġerarkija. Mela mhux biżżejjed ngħidu li n-nar hu maskili, imma rridu nsaqsu wkoll liema tip ta' maskulinità hu assoċjat magħha.

Fl-immaġinazzjoni popolari ta' ħafna nies (jiġifieri dik l-immaġinazzjoni li twassal għal ittra bħal dik fit-Times) l-irġiel li jaħdmu n-nar għandhom irġulija kemxejn partikolari. Dawn huma nies x'aktarx fuq tagħhom li lesti litteralment jilagħbu man-nar, li jissugraw mingħajr hsieb għal saħħiethom u dik tan-nies ta' madwarhom. (Nafu



*Parti mill-baraxxijiet mahruqa f'sinkronizzazzjoni elettronika mal-mužika*

li mhux il-każ imma l-fatt hu li ħafna nies hekk jaħsbuha – ta' min forsi ngħidu li l-kaċċaturi wkoll spiss igergru minn dan il-pregudizzju.) Il-ħoss tal-murtal, mela, jista' jgħib quddiem għajnejn dak li jkun irġiel li ‘jagħmlu li jridu’. Spiss nisimgħu fil-fatt nies li jgergru, wara xi ħarqa tajba, li ‘f’Malta kulħadd jagħmel li jrid’.

Il-ħoss tan-nar, mela, għal xi nies jirrappreżenta rġulija partikolari, irġulija li ma tiddejjaqx tagħmel l-istorbju u tikkawża periklu għall-pjaċir tal-individwu. Sintendi hemm ħafna oħrajn li ma jaqblux. Għal dawk tal-ewwel in-nar x’aktarx hu storbju; għal dawn tat-tieni hu ħoss. U hawnhekk joħroġ l-ewwel punt tagħna fuq din il-kwistjoni kollha bejn storbju u ħoss.

## Modernità moderata

Niġu għat-tieni punt. Hafna mid-diskussjoni marbuta man-nar iddur madwar il-kunċett tal-moderazzjoni. Kważi hemm qbil u kunsens (b'eċċeżżjonijiet żgħar), anke fost dawk li jarawh bħala storbju, li n-nar m'għandux jispiċċa għal kollox. Dan għaliex fost l-oħrajn hu meqjus parti mit-tradizzjoni tal-festa tar-rahal - u ngħiduha, arma effikaċi biex tirbaħ il-qlub, l-imħuħ u l-bwiet tat-turisti.

Il-kunċett ta' moderazzjoni jorbot ferm ma' li wieħed iżzomm kontrol tal-ħoss. Il-murtali tal-bomba huma fil-fatt l-aktar li jiġbdu lejhom kritika. Dawn ukoll l-iktar li jagħmlu ħoss, u li skont l-argument tagħna l-iktar li jwessgħu l-ispażju tal-festa. Jekk jitneħħew il-murtali tal-bomba nkunu effettivament qed inċekknu ċ-ċirkomferenza tal-ispażju tal-festa Maltija.

Anke fost id-dilettanti, huma ftitħafna dawk li jargumentaw li l-idea tal-moderazzjoni m'hemmx lokha. Kif tistgħu timmaġinaw, hu meta niġu biex niddeċiedu eż-żgħix xi tfisser moderazzjoni li jibda l-bużillis. Il-politiċi pereżempju jħobbu jitkellmu fuq il-bilanċ li jeħtieġ jinstab bejn it-tradizzjoni u d-dixxiplina. U kif tafu tajjeb, il-Knisja nnifisha bħalissa tinsab f'nuqqas ta' qbil mad-dilettanti wara li ħargu l-proposti ta' kontoll fuq il-festi. “Aħna qatt ma għidna lil ħadd li n-nar għandu jispiċċa”, qalilna rappreżentant tal-knisja, “però hemm nar u hemm nar – l-eċċessi mhumiex ġusti, għandna l-obbligu tar-rispett lejn l-oħrajn”. L-akbar kritika x’aktarx ġejja mill-kontributuri fuq il-ġurnali bl-Ingliz; specjalment fl-aħħar snin kien hawn baraxx ta' kritika qawwija kontra n-nar. Fl-aħħar nett anke d-dilettanti nfushom jitkellmu dwar il-bżonn tal-moderazzjoni. Kif qalilna wieħed minnhom, “Hemm bżonn aktar kontroll. L-affarijiet kienu ħarbu mill-kontroll u xi wħud kien qed jagħmlu li jridu – però l-infurzar irid ikun ġust ma' kulħadd.”

Hemm żewġ aspetti ta' dan id-diskors kollu dwar il-moderazzjoni. L-ewwel wieħed hu dak tal-moralità. Fil-Malti l-kelma ‘kwiet’ għandha tifsira morali meta tintuża għal individwi u anke postijiet. Meta ngħidu ‘raġel kwiet’, pereżempju, nkunu qed infissru raġel ta' ftit kliem u ta' fiduċja; ‘post kwiet’ ifisser ukoll post residenzjali bla nkiet u tajjeb biex tgħix fi. Meta niġu għan-nar, naħsbu taqblu magħna li diffiċli nużaw il-kelma ‘kwiet’. Fl-istess ħin imma n-nar huwa parti mill-festa, li hi wkoll espressjoni tal-moralità u r-religjon tal-komunità lokali. Id-diskors ta' moderazzjoni jinkwadra proprju hawn, għax il-moderazzjoni fin-nar issir speċi ta' medjazzjoni, ta' kompromess, bejn in-nuqqas ta' kwiet (u allura l-immoralità) tal-festa, u religjożità (u allura l-moralità)

tagħha. Il-moderazzjoni, mela, tagħti ġerta leġitimità lin-nar għax tippreserva l-moralità tiegħi. Hu anke għalhekk li nsibu li ħafna drabi n-nuqqas ta' moderazzjoni fin-nar tiġi mfissra bħala att immorali lejn ix-xjuħ u l-morda, pereżempju. Hu għalhekk ukoll li d-dilettanti nfushom jaqblu li għandu jkun hemm xi tip ta' moderazzjoni; l-ebda dilettant ma jixtieq jiġi ttimbrat bħala xi ħadd li jaqa' u jqum mill-morda u x-xjuħ.

Hemm aspett ieħor tal-moderazzjoni. Forsi smajtu li xi xhur ilu l-Kummissjoni Ewropea d-deċidiet li tressaq lil Malta quddiem il-Qrati tal-Ġustizzja Ewropej għax Malta ma onoratx l-obbligu tagħha li tirriċerka u tirregola l-istorbju kif titlob l-hekk imsejha Noise Directive tal-EU. Mhux se noqogħdu nidħlu fid-dettalji hawn. Ninnutaw biss li l-ligijiet Ewropej – li għal ħafna Maltin jirrapreżentaw il-qofol tal-modernità (anke jekk ma jaqblux magħhom) – qed jagħmlu enfasi fuq il-moderazzjoni fil-ħoss.

U hawn jidħol in-nar. Għal dawk li jaraw in-nar bħala storbju, hemm tendenza li jarawh ukoll bħala xi ħaġa primittiva, xi ħaġa kontra l-modernità jiġifieri. Hu għalhekk li xi wħud jiddeskrivu l-ħarqa bħal ‘qisna qegħdin l-Afganistan’. Interessanti li fid-dibattitu tal-proġett tal-Belt ta’ Renzo Piano, ħafna nnutaw li impossibbli jkollok teatru mikxu f’pajjiż fejn kull ġimġha għandek festa għal waħda tnejn. Hawnhekk toħroġ din id-distinzjoni fl-imħuħ ta’ ħafna bejn l-ispażju civilizzat ta’ teatru u l-ispażju primittiv tas-sema sajfī Malti.

Hemm ħafna iktar x’wieħed jgħid fuq in-nar. F’din it-taħdita qasira ppruvajna biss noħorgu żewġ aspetti żgħar – dak tar-rabta bejn nar u festa, u dak tal-kontroversji li joħloq il-ħoss, jew l-istorbju, tan-nar. Storbju jew ħoss, żgur li ftit hemm affarjiet li joħolqu tant faxxinu u mistoqsijiet għall-antropologija.



*Ir-raddiena li rebħet it-titlu tal-Guinness World għall-akbar raddiena fid-dinja mahruqa lejliet il-festa tal-Ġilju fl-Imqabba f'Ġunju 2011*

## Abstract

The point of our talk will be to move fireworks from the backdrop they normally occupy, to the foreground of festa - and on this occasion of our analysis. We have no doubt that indeed, ‘m’hemmx festa bla nar’, for five reasons. First, fireworks are an intrinsic part of what we might call the ‘soundscape’ of festa. Second, there is something quite special about the sound of fireworks, in that it is pervasive and experienced via the whole body. Third, fireworks serve to structure the time of festa. Fourth, they are an important element of the *pika* (rivalry) that so energises our festi. Fifth, they ‘spread’ festa across space in fascinating ways. We will also be looking at some of the ways in which fireworks lend themselves to politics and contestations, by discussing the intersections between them and gender, modernity, and ‘moderation’.



### Nota Bijografika

Christine M. Cassar hi studenta ghal MPhil fl-Analiżi tal-Antropoloġija Soċjali fl-Università ta' Cambridge (Jesus College), bi studju fuq *hawala networks* fl-Ewropa u l-Afrika tal-Lvant. Hi ggradwat *summa cum laude* fil-baċellerat bl-unuri fis-Soċjologija mill-Università ta' Malta, b' riċerka fuq ir-relazzjoni bejn il-hoss u l-ispazji. Fl-istess zmien hija kienet qed tagħmel xogħol ta' assistenza tar-riċerka fl-Arkivju Nazzjonali tal-Data tal-Ġustizzja Kriminali fl-ICPST, l-Università ta' Michigan, Ann Arbor. Hi rriċerkat ukoll u kitbet dwar ir-rappreżentanza taż-żgħażaqgħ fl-Assemblea Ĝenerali tan-Nazzjonijiet Uniti, temi ta' drittijiet tal-bniedem fil-ħrejjef, u ugwaljanza fil-Curriculum Minimu Nazzjonali Malti.



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# The Theatricality of the Maltese festa

Vicki Ann Cremona

The parish *festa* is one of a range of religious street processions which include various celebrations such as Corpus Christi, Good Friday, Easter Sunday and others. Religious ceremonial in these islands, which dates back to prehistoric times, is an intrinsic component of Malta's cultural roots. Much public celebration in the Maltese islands is linked to religious festivities. The *festa* is certainly the most popular, as it allows the community to regenerate itself and derive new strength by providing a privileged moment for people to come together and reaffirm their common identity in an ostentatious display staged for their benefit, as well as for that of the rest of the population. It is very difficult to imagine the Maltese community without its *festi* as their celebration constitutes an essential and seemingly indispensable component of Maltese social and cultural life.

The word '*festa*' brings to mind a special time, set apart from the rest of the year, which is a focal point in the life of a parish. It brings together those who identify themselves as belonging to a particular community, through the celebration of the community's patron saint. Though the saint would appear to be the focus of attention, and everything is done to proclaim the saint's glory and greatness, in reality the celebration is a way for the community to celebrate itself, its importance and distinction. All that contributes towards making the *festa* bigger and better serves the ulterior purpose of throwing light on the value of a community which is capable of producing something of consequence. Accordingly, the theatrical qualities of the festivity also serve to highlight the community's capacity to attract the attention, admiration and, up to a certain extent, the envy of persons outside it. Preparations are carried out all through the year, and climax in the religious, social and theatrical moment of the *festa* celebrations.

The theatrical qualities of the event emerge through various elements; however this paper will focus on two, namely ostentation and transformation. Ostentation brings things into sharp focus by the act of showing them. The underlying intent of this act is to attract attention, to oneself, one's community, and one's immediate environment. The purpose of the celebration is for the individual members of a community to show themselves to the other members of the same community, for that community to show itself to other communities within the town or village, and for the village or town community to show itself to the wider national context. This is even more relevant in a country like Malta, where the relative proximity of any town or village makes it possible for people from any part of the country to attend a specific local *festa*, without this constituting a problem either in terms of time or travel. Barring a few exceptions, most *festi* are today generally celebrated during the weekends in the summer season. Formerly, they were celebrated all through the year on the day corresponding to the saint's feast day according to the religious calendar<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> On March 8, 1977, six feasts were moved to the weekends, and were removed from the list of Holy

The recognition of the importance of a particular *festa* is perceived as a means of enhancing the prestige of the particular village or town district that organises it. More importantly, it serves to bring the people together, since it is the principal occasion in the year where, through the celebration of the feast of the patron saint, the participants identify themselves as belonging to a particular community. The latter does not only comprise the persons living in the locality, but also those from the village or town district who have moved to other areas of the Maltese islands, as well as emigrants, originally from the area, who usually plan their rare holidays in Malta around the time of the *festa*, bringing back their children and grandchildren so that they too can participate in the celebrations, and therefore acquire a sense of belonging within a particular community. A number of village or town communities are split into smaller groups, each having their own patron saint. This state of affairs gives rise to rivalry or ‘*pika*’, with each faction claiming to be the oldest, the biggest, the strongest – in a word, the best. As Boissevain states: “‘*Pika*’ denotes relations of competition, ill-feeling, hostility [...] if there is *pika* between two groups, a no-holds-barred competition is expected”<sup>2</sup>. The *festa* becomes an ostentatious means to express the superiority of one faction and its domination over the other. Rivalry constitutes a basic element in the shaping of the *festa* and the production of the festivity’s dramatic effects, since it is often the pivot for action within the *festa* celebration. The fact of belonging to a particular faction may also mean partisanship for a particular political party. Ostentation therefore, does not only include the religious and social aspects but also penetrates politics, which play an important role at all levels of social life in the Maltese Islands. Indeed, the lack of a patron saint in the new towns and villages does not only deprive the local community from having a focal point for a shared identity, it also divests the community of an important platform for political activity.

## The Ostentation of the festive space

The idea of ostentation is articulated at various levels within the feast. The festive space embodies flamboyance. For this reason, radical changes are made to the physical appearance of the area of the town or village where the festivities are to be held. These changes are of two types: one of enhancement, and the other of transformation. They are carried out both by the inhabitants of the festive space and by the community which takes over this space during the time of the *festa*. Since the space shared by the community becomes the stage for celebration, the people who live in that area generally feel the need to embellish their houses just before the *festa* period, as these are to serve as *décor* for the feast itself. A well-preserved and decorated house is also a way of attracting attention to the people living within it. Therefore, façades and

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days of Obligation. These were: St Joseph, the Ascension, Corpus Christi, St Peter and Saint Paul, the Feast of all Saints and the Immaculate Conception. (see Bonnici, Joseph, Cassar, Michael (2004) *A Chronicle of Twentieth Century Malta*, Malta, Book Distributors Ltd., p. 391).

<sup>2</sup> Boissevain, J. (1993) [1969] *Saints and Fireworks. Religion and Politics in Rural Malta*, Valletta, Progress Press Ltd, p. 74.

interiors are often repainted around the time of the *festa* in order to give houses a new sparkle. During the days of the celebrations, particularly in the evenings, front rooms and hallways are thrown open, ablaze with light.

The fact that houses are put on public view only when they look their best is very much in keeping with Maltese custom as houses, especially in the past, were shut to the outside world, unless there was a festive occasion. The house would be spring-cleaned from top to bottom before letting in any outsiders, and this is still the case in many households, which is why people do not often invite others spontaneously to come to their homes. A house that was not spotlessly clean and in perfect order threw a shadow on housewifely capabilities. If anyone came unexpectedly, they were shown to the front room of the house, which often remained unused, although regularly cleaned, so that housewifely – and family – honour was maintained<sup>3</sup>.

The fact of putting the front rooms of the house in full view during the *festa* allows passers-by to admire the beauty and quality of the furniture, hangings, paintings and decorative objects within the houses. In the past, in the less affluent sections of the parish, this was also a way of showing off a better economic status; in fact, families who could afford any modern appliances would purchase them in time for the *festa* and show them off in the front room during the period of celebration. Today this type of economic ostentation is often expressed through the apparent abundance of possessions, generally shown through an accumulation of objects, particularly decorative ones, which attract the eye of persons in the street.

Decoration is not limited to houses and streets, it also prevails in the church where the '*festa ta' gewwa'* or '*indoor festa*' is celebrated. The church too, is transformed into an extra-ordinary space, and its importance is indicated by the rich red and gold damask drapings, the fine gold and silver objects, the cloths enhanced with embroidery or lace, and the decoration around the space of the statue. The type of work required inside the church brings together various abilities in order to create a sight characterised by its beauty and sumptuousness.

The space of outdoor celebration - '*festa ta' barra*' - is also marked by its transformation from an ordinary to an 'extra-ordinary' space. This is done by various means. Some households decorate a front window with elements in keeping with the theme of the feast. Little icons reproducing the statue of the patron saint, decorated with vases, flowers, swags of cloth etc. highlight the participation of the family in the festive celebrations. Moreover, these miniature reproductions of the type of decoration that can be found in the church around the saint underline the strong ties that link the household to the saint and therefore to the rest of the community. It is interesting to note that whereas in the past these types of decorations were to be found in most windows, they are now becoming rarer. Could this be taken as an indication of the dwindling religious importance of the feast? Another way of linking interior to exterior is by decorating balconies with lights, festoons, and pictures of the patron saint. Again

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<sup>3</sup> Standards of cleanliness inside Maltese households are fastidiously high, and in cases, contrast sharply with those that are still considered acceptable in the street.

in this case, though quite a few families put rows of coloured bulbs to light up their balconies purposely for the feast, the number of pictures of the patron saint hanging out from these balconies has greatly diminished. Lights decorating the balconies are another way of attracting attention to a household. Church façades and local clubs are also lit up. The lights in the clubs are a symbol of their prestige and self-importance. They are also a sign of harmony between church and club, as in case of serious dispute, they may be switched off, or not put up at all. Ostentation, or the lack of it, is also a way of measuring power between church and club.

A very striking way of demonstrating the fact that a feast is taking place in a particular locality to the surrounding areas is through the raising of huge flags on roofs, in the squares and other areas of the town or village. Private individuals and clubs pay artists to paint flags that are hoisted on their dwellings or clubs. There is huge competition as to who has the biggest and most beautiful flag, as well as the highest flagpole; in fact, towns such as Zurrieq, are famous for the quality and beauty of the flags flown, particularly for the *festa* of Our Lady of Mount Carmel<sup>4</sup>. The flags generally represent the patron saint. One of the highest flagpoles on the island is raised in Birgu on the bastions, for the feast of St Dominic. In the past, in Sliema, one of the biggest entrepreneurs on the island, Mr Joe Gasan, had earned himself the nickname of “Heaven’s Consul” [*Il-Konslu tas-sema*] because he hoisted a large new flag on his rooftop every year.

### Transforming the Street – *il-grupp tal-armar*

The intervention on the space of celebration by the representatives of the community obviously has a much more powerful impact than that of the individual households. It creates a radical transformation in the appearance of the space itself. This is mostly due to the type of decoration to be found in the streets, known under the collective name of ‘*armar*’. This decoration is one of the primary indicators that a *festa* is about to occur in the area to anyone who lives outside it, thus transforming the ordinary, everyday, familiar space into an exceptional one, where colour and setting provide a theatrical background for the eventual enactment of the event. The streets are heavily decorated, but the type of embellishment to be found in a particular street is determined by what is to pass through it, whether it is the band parade or the procession itself, with the huge statue of the patron saint carried shoulder high. In the past, the importance of the street with regard to the *festa* procession also enhanced the property value of the houses situated on it; value was also determined in function of distance to the church and the streets the procession passed through.

<sup>4</sup> I am indebted to various *festa* enthusiasts and participants for the precious information they have supplied through time, that has proved indispensable in writing this paper, most particularly Donald Caligari Conti, as well as Arch. Claude Busuttil, Marie Grech, Helena Mallia, Isabelle Borg, Mario Frendo and Wilfred Kenely. I would also like to thank Rev. Dr John Avellino and Prof. Paul Clough for their very useful notes and comments, as well as the numerous people who so kindly helped me during my fieldwork, carried out in the streets of various towns and villages, who did not always give me their names.

The ‘*triq processjonali*’ (processional road, i.e. the road through which the procession is to pass) is arrayed with ‘*pavaljuni*’, large drapes of brightly-coloured cloth resembling huge valances, that stretch across the width of the roads at regular intervals. These are generally designed, made, hung up and stored by keener members of the community. The streets are also lined with decorations such as *bandalori* (banners), *antanjoli* (long poles from which ornamental banners are hung at both ends) and wooden columns painted to look like marble<sup>5</sup>, bearing angels, saints, or chandeliers. The streets through which the band parades are to pass are usually less elaborately decorated, with ‘*liedna*’ (paper streamers) and in some cases, a few ‘*pavaljuni*’. All streets are lit up with ‘*fustuni*’ (rows of coloured bulbs).



*Il-pavaljuni saru eleaborati u juru hiliet artistici kbar*

Putting up street decorations is an arduous, time-consuming task. Participation of young or older men in this activity is not simply a sign of interest or keenness for the feast. It is also a way for these men to show themselves off to the rest of the community through their strength and ability - a means of acquiring importance in the community’s eyes. When in the 1990s, the church of St Paul’s Shipwreck in Valletta decided to change its ‘*pavaljuni*’, the designer of the new drapings not only attracted attention to himself, but acquired new importance within the community when the new ones were hung and won the approval not just of the community itself, but of the daily visitors to Valletta. The maintenance of the decorations, and the effort to keep them ‘as new’ is a job to which a group of men, known as ‘*il-grupp tal-armor*’, dedicate themselves all year round. This occupation becomes a passion for them, providing something to do in

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<sup>5</sup> The technique of creating a marbling effect, known as ‘*irħamar*’, is a very old skill, as the rare craftsmen who still practise it are wont to underline.

their spare time. On a more general level, it contributes to creating special ties between them and the religious community, as well as with the other members and officials of the club. Not only do they obtain easy access to spaces that, in other circumstances, would be closed to them, but they are in the position to choose who to take with them, and who to allow within their circle – an ulterior sign of social prestige.

## Colour and Sound in the *Festa*

The *armor* makes the streets come alive with colour. Colour is not only used to catch the eye, but also to express affiliation to the particular saint being celebrated, thereby reinforcing the sense of *communitas* generated by the feast<sup>6</sup>. The saint's colours are brought out in the *pavaljuni*, flags, balloons, as well as in the T-shirts and, more recently, face paint worn by the persons celebrating the particular feast. Colour can also be seen as the outward manifestation of rivalry, a particular trait that may be termed as generally characteristic of Maltese society. Village and town communities are often split into two opposing factions. As mentioned previously, in many towns and villages, two *festi* are celebrated, that of the titular saint, known as *festa primarja* (primary feast), and the *festa sekondarja* (secondary feast), that of another saint, whose statue is either situated in the same church, or in another church in a different area of the town or village. This opposition finds immediate expression in the communities' identification with one of the two saints, and culminates in the theatrical expressivity of the feast. It has led to the creation of two parallel structures in the same village or town district, both having not only their own statue, but also their own *armor*, their own band, their own songs, and their own colours. Colour visually underlines not only the fact of belonging to a particular community, but also of non-identification with anyone who does not wear the same colours. This use of colour can be found in other traditional celebrations around the Mediterranean, such as for example, the colours worn by participants in the 'palio' in Siena, Italy, which are one of the principal distinguishing features of the different participating city districts, known as '*contrade*'.

Choice of colour can be seen as having different layers of meaning, on a social as well as a political level. The strong link between community, colour and religion is a core element of the *festa*. In certain *festi*, colour highlights the opposing features of village and small town communities, where members belong to rival districts, clubs, and even patron saints. Significantly, colour is also a way of expressing political partisanship. Parliament in Malta is made up of two parties which are generally perceived as opposing each other on any issue that is discussed and voted for<sup>7</sup>. In fact

<sup>6</sup> The term, used by Victor Turner, expresses in this context a 'community of feeling'. See. Turner, V. (1974) *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors. Symbolic Action in Human Society*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, p. 274..

<sup>7</sup> In the past few years, among the rare issues that seem to have obtained the general consensus of both the Nationalist and Labour parties are the approval of the law regarding rights and equal opportunities for disabled persons, and the parliamentarians' auto-attribution of an impressive rise in salary and an advantageous pension scheme which is unparalleled by any other scheme for any other Maltese citizen, in the Maltese system of social benefits.

*festa* and political rivalry have often blended; in certain areas, partisans of a particular saint are affiliated to a particular political party<sup>8</sup>. In the political world, the colour red is identified with the Malta Labour Party and blue with the Nationalist Party. Although blue and red are certainly not the only partisan colours<sup>9</sup> to be found in *festi* (which were part of Maltese cultural reality centuries before the parties ever came into existence), these colours predominate within various feasts, where they are worn by rival factions in a village or town<sup>10</sup>.

It would seem, however, that in origin, the choice of colours by the two parties was also given religious attributes. The two colours were introduced in the 1960s and in Maltese voting papers, the names of Nationalist and Labour party candidates are written in blue and red respectively to this day. In the sixties, one way of encouraging people to vote for the Nationalist Party was to use the argument that blue was for the Virgin Mary. Since this also represented a time of great strife between the Labour Party and the church, people sustaining the above argument would often whisper that red - which was the colour of revolution long before it became associated to socialism - was for the devil!<sup>11</sup> The community's colours are generally worn for the '*marcijiet*' or band marches, where the statue of the Saint is not present, especially during '*il-marc ta' filghodu*' (morning march), which is certainly a peak moment of flamboyant revelry in the festivities.

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<sup>8</sup> For a detailed discussion about *festa* and party politics, see Boissevain, J. (1993) *Saints and Fireworks. Religion and Politics in Rural Malta*, Valletta, Progress Press Ltd.

<sup>9</sup> In Zabbar for example, people belonging to the faction of St Michael, known as *Tal-Bajda* (egg) wear green while those of the Virgin Mary, known as *tal-Baqra* (cow), wear blue.

<sup>10</sup> An example of religious and political affiliation may be seen in the town of Hamrun, where the supporters of the secondary saint, St Joseph wear blue, and are generally pro-Nationalist and those of the titular saint, San Gejtanu wear red are generally affiliated to the Labour Party. Blue and red also distinguish the supporters of St Mary and St George in Rabat, Gozo. In this case, the choice of colours is justified in this way: blue is the colour of the Virgin Mary, and red is the colour of the martyr. In Naxxar, the two band club supporters who share the same patron saint, also are distinguished by red and blue colours: The Banda Peace wear blue and the Banda Victory wear red, and are usually labourite supporters. However, in Żurrieq, the partisans of the *festa* of Our Lady of Mount Carmel wear blue, and are perceived as being pro-Labour, while those of the rival *festa*, that of St. Catherine, wear red and are seen to be more pro-Nationalist.

<sup>11</sup> Most of the 60s, known at the period of *L-Interdett*, mark a very sombre period in Maltese history. On the 8 April 1961, the then Archbishop of the Catholic Church, Mikiel Gonzi, fearful that the leader of the Labour Party, Duminku Mintoff, would introduce Communism into the islands, forbade any professed Labour Party supporters to receive the sacraments. This meant that people could not confess, receive communion, marry within the church or receive a Catholic burial. In a country upholding strong religious beliefs, this was tantamount to social ostracism. This decision, which had deep political and social consequences, was a very wounding experience to many staunch Labour supporters who considered themselves as belonging firmly within the Catholic church, when they suddenly found themselves excluded from it because of their political beliefs. It brought on great division within families and members of the same community, and generated a feeling of deep hurt and bitterness that still exists to this very day. The interdict was lifted on the 4 April 1969, which fell on Good Friday.

The pealing of bells, which begins about a week before the *festa*, is another means of announcing the celebrations to neighbouring areas. Different bell ringers vie in playing various ‘*moti*’ (tunes), varying both sound and quality of tunes and rhythms, and parishes boast of their range and sizes of bells. People hearing the bells are often heard to comment: “*Waslet il-festa*” (literally: the *festa* has arrived), as the pealing conveys a mood of joy and celebration. Since the day of celebration of the *festa* is supposed to mark the day of the demise of the particular saint, in certain parishes, a traditional ‘*mota*’ is played at 4.30 a.m. on the day in order to announce the saint’s entry into heaven. In fact, in Birgu, this is called the ‘*mota tal-Għid ta’ San Lawrenz*’ (literally: the pealing of the Easter of St. Lawrence), where the word ‘*l-ġħid*’ (literally: Easter) underlines the idea of the Saint’s ascension to heaven. Parishioners describe waking to the sound of the ‘*mota*’ as a very moving experience, a tangible sign that the *festa* ‘has really arrived’<sup>12</sup>. The sound, which seems even more ponderous at such an early hour of the morning, is certainly an effective way of announcing the feast to all, near and far. It starts with the chiming of the big bell every thirty seconds; gradually the rhythm is accelerated until all the bells join in a half hour of merry pealing.

In his study of bell tolling in Malta in the nineteenth century, John Chircop shows how colonialist perception of a certain type of ringing of church bells was that of “a primitive custom of a lesser civilised people”, and was actually denounced as inducing mental illness in British residents, who generally saw themselves as situated much higher on the social hierarchy than Maltese locals<sup>13</sup>. It is interesting to see that this argument is very similar to present-day condemnations of another celebratory sound, that of fireworks and especially petards, which shall be described further on in this paper. Jeremy Boissevain points out that criticism against the latter (that also often invokes medical reasons) is generally to be found in English-language newspapers, which are read by the Maltese middle-class and consequently, raises very little opposite reaction as the persons who would be prone to defend the sounds are less likely to purchase or read newspapers in English. Bells, like fireworks, are an intrinsic part of *festa* celebrations. Mark Anthony Falzon and Christine Cassar’s defence of fireworks can also apply to bell-ringing, because as the two authors maintain, they “are an intrinsic element of the soundscape of feasts, a sound that can be “felt” and is practically physical”<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Traditionally, it is rung by young people from the parish who are afterwards invited by the church sacristan to a breakfast of tea and ‘*pastizzi*’ (cheesecakes: puff pastry cut into diamond shapes which are stuffed with a type of cottage cheese).

<sup>13</sup> Chircop, John (2010) ‘From the pulse of social routine to the subversion of normality: the multiple use of bell tolling in two colonial sites: the Ionian islands and Malta 1800-1870s’, in *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 11 and 13.

<sup>14</sup> These ideas were developed in papers by the authors quoted, which were presented at a national seminar organised by Mr Charles Farrugia for the Soċjetà Mużikali Madonna tal-Ġilju Mqabba, entitled: ‘Il-Festi: Kultura u identità’ held on March 31 2011, and reported by Fiona Galea Debono, ‘No Feast without Fireworks’, *The Times*, 1 April, 2011.

## Celebratory moments of the *festa*

The different celebrations characterising a *festa* express a range of moods and rhythms which vary from one type of festivity to another and at particular times, from one period to another within the same event. Although the *festa* does not iron out social differences, it brings people from different social levels together in a common celebration, each contributing through different means and at different levels. Whereas formerly, celebrations within the church were given prime importance, today there is less massive affluence to the saint's celebratory mass, even though the number of people attending remains high. However, the *festa ta' barra* has grown considerably both in importance and dimension, as people abandon religious ritualistic celebration and turn more and more to public manifestations where altered behaviour, although not always publicly approved, is more or less tolerated. People who no longer frequent the church, or do not attend mass as regularly as in the past, still make it a point to 'go to the *festa*' and participate in its different manifestations. The main religious element linking church and street is the patron saint, as all forms of celebration are held in his/her name and dedicated to him/her.

Whereas all ritual in the church underlines the sacred, immaterial elements connected with the veneration of the saint, the saint's status in the street celebrations is far more worldly. The saint takes up a distinct personality, which enables the street revellers to establish a direct and personal relationship with him/her in all forms of street celebration, even in the absence of the statue representing it. Although all evocation of the saint is a collective unifying factor, the saint him/herself is considered as a superior person, a sort of charismatic leader, but who ultimately remains 'one of us' and is part the fun and boisterousness of the celebration. When the statue of the saint is present in the streets, it is not only seen in a referential context, but assumes its own identity and is addressed directly. The statue assumes its own personal aura and charisma, and in certain towns and villages, there are all sorts of stories related to the actual making of the statues, in order to raise their status even higher with regard to others<sup>15</sup>.

The first day of official celebrations is marked by the '*dimostrazzjoni*' (literally, demonstration) when a statue of the patron saint (not the titular statue, which is exposed in the church), or sometimes of a pope, is lifted on to a high column in a prominent area of the town district or village<sup>16</sup>. This is also known as the *ante vigilia*, as it is generally held on the eve of the eve of the feast day proper.

## *Marcijiet*

Brass band parades or *marcijiet* are usually held in the streets on the three evenings preceding the feast day and help to create the build-up to the celebrations. The Saturday

<sup>15</sup> Various inhabitants of Bormla, for example, have often boasted to me that the face of the statue of the 'Immaculate Conception, celebrated on the 8 December, appeared miraculously on the statue during the night, after the nun who was supposed to paint it, feeling inadequate for the huge task to be accomplished, had prayed for inspiration to the Virgin Mary.

<sup>16</sup> The highest column is said to be that of St Lawrence in Birgu.

evening *marc*, which is linked to the ground fireworks that are set off at the end, and the *marc ta' filghodu* are the most popular ones. The latter is one of the culminating moments of the feast, and perhaps the time where the community best expresses its common identity and sense of belonging. It is a time of unrestrained, joyous celebration, and in many parishes, is usually held on Saturday morning, so as not to interfere with the solemn high mass celebrated the next day. This, in turn, is the supreme expression of the ostentation of religious splendour in the festivities held within the church, where the clergy wear their finest vestments and a pontifical mass, lasting about two hours, is sung to the accompaniment of a choir and orchestra<sup>17</sup>.

The brass band represents an important feature in the life of any village or town. Each saint has its own band (or two) and each band its own band club, which is not only a place for rehearsal, but is often the core of social and cultural life, especially in the villages. The club provides a musical education to all young people living in the area wishing to receive it. The inhabitants, in particular the male population, go there not only to learn an instrument, but to meet their friends and socialise, by drinking and playing billiards. When politically inclined, the band club is also a focal point for the development of young people's political leanings as often, to be identified with a club is a way of being identified with a party. Cultural initiatives are also a way to create rivalry between band clubs. This is often expressed through the ostentation of a club's organisational or creative capabilities through a wide range of initiatives, often of a theatrical nature; these vary from staging plays to participating in Carnival<sup>18</sup>. The band plays a predominant role during the *festa* period, as it is inconceivable to have a feast without one. In fact, every band invites other bands – generally from other towns or villages – to play in its *festa* and the sound of the two bands in the marches or procession is something that everyone looks forward to. The band's peak moment in the celebrations is perhaps during the musical programme that is generally given on Saturday evening in the main square. The band is seated on a special, often elaborate, stand known as '*plancier*', and is conducted by the bandmaster. This is the moment when the band can show off its musical abilities to the people standing in the square

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<sup>17</sup> In the past the local grandees, as a sign of prestige, would place their coat-of-arms on the church vestments worn by the priests on the days of the *festa*, thus showing off their importance but at the same time also expressing a sense of belonging to the community, as they were contributing to enhance its importance through the fine quality of the vestments themselves. Marquis Nicholas de Piro, personal communication. With regard to the times of celebration of the morning parade, in Birgu, for example, it is held on the Friday before the weekend of celebration, as the procession is held on Saturday evening, and the celebrations end with the *marc tan-nisa* (women's march) on Sunday night.

<sup>18</sup> This is particularly true of Rabat, Gozo, where the two band clubs, both situated on the main road, each have a theatre where they stage operas, each trying to outdo the other in their productions. For the commemoration of Verdi's centenary in 2001, both clubs chose to stage the *Aida* within two weeks of each other, each hoping to affirm its superiority over the other in this way. Both went to some incredible lengths to ensure the presence of a horse (or two) on stage, one club actually erecting a gangway stretching from the field below the back of the theatre to a backstage balcony situated on the first floor of the theatre building in order to get the horse on stage!

listening to the music being played. The programme also marks a solemn moment for the band which, during most of the festivities, is associated with fun and gaiety as it parades around the space of celebration.

The band marches are characterised by a looser structure and greater spontaneity than the procession itself. The Maltese expressions for indicating participation in the band parade: '*taqbeż quddiem il-marċ*' (to jump in front of the march) and '*timxi wara l-marċ*' (to walk behind the march) indicate the different dynamics in a band parade: the brass band heads a cortège of people who move and sing to the tunes it plays<sup>19</sup>. The success of the march depends heavily on the band's musical skill, as well as its ability to give dynamic impetus to the celebration by producing a large variety of festive tunes that capture and intensify the joyful mood of the participants. The bands usually go out on the three evenings preceding the feast day, but the Saturday evening *marċ*, and the *marċ ta' filgħodu* (morning band march) are the most popular ones. The most important element in the Saturday evening march is the transformation of the



*Il-qbiż quddiem il-marċ kif kien fis-snin sebgħin fl-Imqabba*

<sup>19</sup> In some marches, such as those of St George in Gozo, statues of the saint (not the official one) are paraded during the marches.

physical and aural space through the ground fireworks that are set off at the end and the sounds produced by the *murtali* (petards). The morning march is usually held on the morning of the eve of the feast, although in some parishes it still occurs on the morning of the feast itself. It is also known as the *marc tat-Te Deum* (the Te Deum band march). It is so called because it follows the Te Deum mass, during which the famous hymn is sung to thank the Lord for the year that has just passed. There is, however, certainly nothing religious about the *Te Deum* march and in fact, in certain parishes, the church is locked up during the celebrations.

The different *marcjiet*, particularly the one on the evening before and that on the morning of the *festa*, are predominantly a ‘male’ celebration, a time where males get together and show their ‘*macho*’ qualities through their show of strength and the type of merrymaking and boisterousness they choose to stage, even though today, more and more females are also present. In effect whereas, as discussed previously, the ‘feminine’ aspect in the *festa* is primarily linked to indoors – the decoration inside the houses, but also the cleaning, flower decoration and maintenance of the church hangings, silver and gold objects and altarcloths – the ‘male’ aspect predominates on many levels. As we have seen, elements requiring physical strength and effort or technical capabilities predominate, particularly in the outdoor festivities, both in the decoration of the streets and in setting off fireworks or *murtali*. It has already been stated that in every moment of the *festa*, the actions of each participant are determined, to a lesser or greater degree, by the will to show oneself to the other participants. More importantly, the underlying intent of the reveller is to attract attention to him/herself. Outward appearance and behaviour become the tools to create this focus, and different types of appearance and behaviour can be seen at different moments of the feast, thereby contributing to the creation of different theatrical qualities and nuances to the whole of the proceedings.

## **Fireworks in the Saturday March**

The most important feature of the Saturday evening *marc* is certainly the ground and aerial fireworks display that is given after the brass band cortège has marched through specific designated roads, and comes to rest in an open space full of hand-made firework devices ready to be set off. The quantity and quality of the ground displays, known as ‘*giggifogu*’ are a source of boastful pride to the community. They are of two sorts: ‘*tal-irdieden*’ (Catherine wheels) and ‘*tal-ingranaggi*’ (having a gear mechanism, producing different movements and speeds, which is powered by fireworks that turn round in such a way as to activate the gears). The different displays are often sponsored by individuals or band clubs and can serve to promote a particular manufacturer<sup>20</sup>. Ground fireworks always end by the ‘*tapit*’ (carpet) which consists of a large display of movement, colour and light. The larger the number of fireworks used, the more they become a source of pride for the community. This display is usually

<sup>20</sup> One of the most famous fireworks factories, that of St Michael in Lija, celebrates its anniversary at the end of the festive season, by creating a fireworks display where the prototypes of new mechanisms are displayed for the first time, advertising its new products in this way.

followed by the ‘*kaxxa infernali*’ (literally ‘infernal box’, an apt term referring to the aerial fireworks)<sup>21</sup>.

Making and handling fireworks is a way for the men to show off their strength and courage, and to win the admiration of the community. Maltese fireworks are splendid affairs. The fireworks themselves, huge in dimension, are all hand made by people who are passionate about their art. The art of making and handling them is so dangerous that many of the men who choose to do so bear the scars of their endeavour – with fingers, arms and even legs missing. The community knows them well, and speaks of them in heroic terms. Photographs of fireworks makers and handlers adorn the walls of the clubs which are renowned for their displays. Fireworks do not only produce colour but also sound (particularly the *murtali* (petards), both being especially designed to produce different effects according to the ‘*bomba*’ (literally bomb, in this case a type of petard) launched<sup>22</sup>. *Dawk intizi* (literally ‘those who are well-verses’, i.e. the fireworks experts) describe the explosions as a ‘harmony of sounds’. They will recognize a firework simply from the way it goes up into the air, before it explodes into light and colour, and will shout the firework’s name to the other watching bystanders. The splendour of a *festa* is also determined by its rich and varied fireworks. As John Mitchell points out:

Fireworks are one of the main ways the events of the *festa* are ‘set aside’ or ‘ritualised’. They provide an important aural back-drop against which *festa* is performed. A necessary part of the *festa*, they are also one of the main media of competition between rival *festi* [...] rival *festi* will attempt to exceed either the quantity or quality – or both – of their neighbours and great pride is taken in having better fireworks.<sup>23</sup>

Therefore the men’s work is a way of earning prestige both for themselves, and for the whole community and contributes to enhancing the importance of the village or town district not only in the community’s eyes, but also on a national level.

### ***Il-marc ta’ filghodu***

During the different marches, not only do the bands set a festive tempo by bringing the brisk and merry tunes to the different streets, thereby steeping the inhabitants into the extra-daily<sup>24</sup> time of the feast, but again they express a sense of identity and belonging that reaches its zenith in the *marc ta’ filghodu*. This march, to a greater extent than the

<sup>21</sup> The parish of Stella Maris, Sliema, holds its fireworks display on Sunday at the end of the procession. The statue of Our Lady is carried to the seafront and turned towards the sea, so that, as the inhabitants say, she too can watch the fireworks, which are organised in her honour.

<sup>22</sup> There is in fact, an extensive vocabulary to describe the type of firework as well as the noises it produces. Some examples of this are: *Spanjola*: a huge volley of secondary explosions following a main one, *barrage*: a volley of short explosions, *murtali tal-ħsejjes maqlubin*: a long sound and two short ones, heard a second time in the reverse pattern.

<sup>23</sup> Mitchell, J. P. (2002) *Ambivalent Europeans*, London and New York, Routledge, p. 196.

<sup>24</sup> I borrow the term from Eugenio Barba. See Barba, E. (1995) *The Paper Canoe*, London and New York, Routledge, p. 15.

others, contains a whole series of ostentatious manifestations which bring to mind the *Bacchanalia* in ancient Greek times, where in the name of Dionysius, god of wine and ritual madness, followers would lose their inhibitions and perform acts that were normally not permitted. Due probably to the totally pagan revelry that takes place, albeit in the name of the saint, the church authorities have decreed that the *marc* cannot last longer than four hours, a limit which has been contested by certain parishes who would like it to last six hours, certainly in order to prolong their loud display of feasting and merriment.

The *marc ta' filghodu* is usually headed by the most important members of the band clubs and of the community, who are followed by large numbers of people mainly from the community itself<sup>25</sup>. As indicated previously, the people 'belonging' to a saint bear the saint's colours by wearing specially made T-shirts or scarves around their necks. Youngsters have taken to painting their faces and even colouring their hair in the same colour(s). What is perhaps one of the most recent and most peculiar objects to be carried in the *marc*, has practically become its symbol: a long flexible pole, usually made of plastic tubing, to which tens of balloons, in the parish colours, are tied. The pole sways easily to the rhythm of the band and the movement of the person carrying it. Its size and the rhythmic movement it conveys are a large, visible demonstration of the sense of power and triumph felt by the community in their common celebration. Other new objects are the huge parasols made of streamers and carried on wheels, which add to the colour and gaiety of the moment. Added brio is given by the



*Il-briju tal-marc ta' filghodu fl-aqwa tiegħu*

<sup>25</sup> Many people from the parish of San Ġorġ in Qormi, Malta, join in the morning celebrations of San Ġorġ in Gozo, as the *festa* occurs on the same weekend as that of St Sebastian, the rival parish *festa*.

masses of strips of paper that are tossed from balconies on to the passers-by and the bandsmen. These are usually thrown by children, who also have a great time pitching papers up in the air in the streets. In some parishes, the amount of papers thrown can be such that children actually wade knee-deep through them<sup>26</sup>. However, whereas in most parishes, paper-throwing marks every moment of street celebration, whether solemn or gay, in others it is limited to Saturday night and Sunday morning, because the sharp edges of the paper can damage the gilding of the statue. In other cases a compromise has been reached, papers are thrown even during the Sunday procession, but not over the statue of the patron saint<sup>27</sup>.

The songs sung in the marches are key elements in this festive ritual<sup>28</sup>. They are learned by the inhabitants from childhood and remembered all their lives. Singing the words of the *marc* or rather, shouting them out loud for everyone to hear, is a way of affirming one's belonging to the community. The song lyrics are also very important, as they establish and affirm unity between the revellers and their saint. Various songs also include taunts to the rival faction in the village. As M. Grech states:

“The March is the ideal framework where one can take pleasure in fulfilling both the manifestation of celebration and that of insulting – at the same time”<sup>29</sup>.

The *marc* may be, in fact, a potentially dangerous moment – this is when fights may break out more easily with rival factions, and in fact, also depending on the parish, there may be quite an impressive police contingent to guarantee law and order. Parish rivals are not only taunted through the songs' lyrics but also through the mode of delivery; in places where the *marc* passes in front of the rival band club, the songs become much louder and more aggressive. This is certainly one of the most forceful moments of the feast: the festive community flaunts its strength and unity through words and movement. People jump up and down, arms are pointed upwards in a common gesture that can also seem somewhat threatening to people who are not part of the crowd, especially when sung outside a rival band club. Particularly at that time, the community

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<sup>26</sup> This is particularly the case in the feast of St Paul in Valletta where at least three printing presses provide waste paper to be cut and thrown.

<sup>27</sup> A very recent novelty seems to be the throwing of garlands of paper flowers in the parish colours, as well as little toys over the *bandisti* (band players) in the Saturday *marc*. This was certainly the case in the Feast of St Publius, Floriana in March 2003. Isabelle Borg, Floriana resident, personal communication. It would be interesting to see whether the recent craze for small soft toys, which are now being used in a wide variety of circumstances, can be traced back to Lady Diana's funeral in 1997, when through television, the whole world saw small soft toys being placed beside flowers at the gates of Buckingham Palace.

<sup>28</sup> I use ritual in the sense of 'standardised act' as defined by Richard Schechner, rather than Victor Turner's definition of a 'complex sequence of symbolic acts'. See Turner, V. (1992) *The Anthropology of Performance*, New York, PAJ Publications, p. 75.

<sup>29</sup> For rivalry within the context of the Maltese festa, see the case study by Marika Grech (2002) *Performativity and Rivalry: Characteristics of a celebrative event in the feasts of San Ġorġ and Santa Marija in Victoria, Gozo*, University of Malta, BA (Hons) dissertation, unpublished p. 63. The study also contains a detailed description of the operatic incident mentioned in note 18, on pp. 70-71.

shows itself as a single, compact mass of people. People are tightly packed together, and the very close proximity contributes to intensifying the feeling of belonging. Drink certainly helps to make behaviour even more ostentatious. Consequently, as the morning *marc* is celebrated in the summer heat, the hot sun beating down on people certainly raises blood and alcohol levels, and camaraderie and aggression are taken to new pitches. Vast amounts of cold beer are purchased, either to drink, or to pour over oneself in order to cool down<sup>30</sup>. In fact, during the *marc*, it is not uncommon to hear the cry: “*Irridu l-ilma*” (we want water) which the revellers shout to the people in the balconies, asking them to douse them with water in order to provide them some relief from the intense heat<sup>31</sup>.

### The evening procession

The type of mood characterising the morning celebrations is very different to the one prevailing in the evening procession, with its aura of solemnity. In fact, one can speak of a spatial metamorphosis – papers are swept away from the streets, empty bottles are made to disappear and the village is spruced up for the evening celebrations. People’s appearance also changes radically; all the men who have revelled, drunk and paraded in their colours in the morning, put on a sober and serious appearance in the evening. Dress code is radically different. Gone are the scruffy T-shirts, shorts and scarves. This is the housewives’ moment of pride: house and family appearance are an indication of the women’s ability at managing a good household. The fact that the streets are closed to traffic during the celebrations brings more people both from the locality and outside into the streets. Not only are houses thrown open for all to see and admire, but people take their chairs to their doorsteps and usually install them on the pavements in front of their houses. The women make sure that all the members of their family are dressed in their best clothes, so they can be seen and admired by all. Many women actually purchase dresses, or have them purposely made, for the *festa*. Some still have a new dress for every evening of the celebrations, and wear their best one on Sunday. Older women tend to wear some of (or even all) their fine jewels on these days, particularly on Sunday evening. Their children are also very well groomed and dressed and expected to remain looking neat and tidy all evening. Husbands and older sons appear in suits or smart clothing, often also specifically bought for the *festa*. Young unattached people, particularly girls, tend to flaunt their appearance by wearing trendy clothing which has, in the last few years, sometimes become rather daring, usually far more eye-catching than that of girls with boyfriends. Traditionally the *festa* has always been a privileged moment for young people in the community to meet and court each other. This was certainly the case in the past, when it represented one of the rare moments when young girls were allowed out in public, and could therefore more easily catch the eye of a possible suitor.

<sup>30</sup> A manager of one of the local beer companies told me that *festi* mark the peak moments for sales, particularly the feast of San Gejtan in Hamrun.

<sup>31</sup> Helena Mallia, Naxxar resident, feast of Our Lady of Victories, Naxxar, personal communication.

The focal point of the Sunday evening celebration is, however, the statue. The beginning of the festive period is marked by bringing the statue out of its niche in the church and placing somewhere along the middle of the nave. The whole space is enhanced with drapings, fresh flowers and candles, as well as hand-made flowers, silver vases and silver chandeliers. The stand on which the statue is placed is made of wood and may be very beautifully inlaid, and some statues, such as that of St Lawrence in Birgu or of St Dominic in Valletta, are actually placed on a silver pedestal, which constitute examples of fine and impressive silver craftsmanship in Malta. The statue always bears some particularly beautiful jewels, which are generally bequeathed to it, or given in repayment of a grace bestowed. The surrounding space inside the church is given a new appearance by means of the lovely red damask drapings covering the walls and silver and gilt fronts or other objects gracing the different altars, especially the main one. The church, with its finery, becomes the expression of the value and merit of the town or village.



*Il-purċissjoni timxi b'mod strutturat u b'sekwenza dettata mit-tradizzjonji u proċedura*

It is the passage of the saint from inner space of the church to outer space of the street which merges the two spaces into one, thanks to the presence of the saint in a transformed space, and the sense of unity that is created by the passage from inside to outside. For the privileged moment of the feast, social and cultural differences between members of the same community are mostly put aside. All festive rituals<sup>32</sup>, from the *dimostrazzjoni*, to the *marcijiet*, the *giggifogu* and *purċissljoni* and *antifona* are characterised by great theatrical qualities, where ostentation and transformation can be observed in the different ways people behave at different moments. They can be seen as different scenes of a performance, where the specific theatrical aspects of each scene create variations of colour and intensity all through the *festa*. However, the most important element in the *festa* lies in the very fact that it is celebrated, and the importance of the different forms of celebration is to be considered by the way these are integrated into the festivity itself.

The two most important moments of the evening procession are the moment when the statue emerges from the church, and that when it is taken back. The two moments are marked by volleys of fireworks and *murtali*. In certain localities, before the procession comes out of the church, people call out to the statue, as though willing it to appear<sup>33</sup>. The coming out of the statue from the church is preceded by the ‘*salut*’ (literally: greeting) which hails the beginning of the procession and consists of the setting off of twenty-one ‘*murtali tal-bomba*’ (petards which explode with a very loud bang). While these go off at intervals, the confraternities, each carrying their ‘*standardi*’ or banners, emerge from the church followed by the altar boys and the clergy, distributed according to rank. After that come the bearers carrying the statue on their shoulders. As soon as the statue appears on the church threshold, a signal is sent to the field where the firework handlers are waiting and the ‘*Kaxxa tal-ħrug*’ (literally: ‘the exit box’, i.e. the petards exploded at the statue’s emergence from the church) are sent off. As these are mostly made up of *murtali tal-bomba*, the huge noise produced informs all the surrounding areas, even those beyond the festive area, that the procession has indeed started. The band plays the saint’s anthem, and after that, depending on the locality, people loudly recite poems to the saint which are often impromptu. These poems praise the saint and proclaim its superiority over anything or anyone else, affirming thereby, the superiority of the parish above any other. This custom is reminiscent of the *saetas*, or spontaneous verses that are sung to the Virgin Mary during the Good Friday processions in Seville, Spain. The band follows the statue, and the procession wends its way through the streets.

Men of the locality often vie for the honour of carrying the statue, also because indirectly this is a confirmation of their strength and prestige. Many men who often carry statues boast of their ‘*ħobża*’ (literally bread, but here meaning hump, formed by

<sup>32</sup> I use ritual in the sense of ‘standardised act’ as defined by Richard Schechner, rather than Victor Turner’s definition of a ‘complex sequence of symbolic acts’. See Turner, V. (1992) *The Anthropology of Performance*, New York, PAJ Publications, p. 75.

<sup>33</sup> This is particularly the case for example, in the Feast of St Paul’s Shipwreck in Valletta where people call out ‘Magnus’ (the great) to the statue which is still inside the church.

the callous skin that is caused by carrying such a heavy load for so long). The bearers' skill in carrying the statue is shown in their ability 'to make it dance' ('iżeffnuha'). The lilt in their step makes the statue sway and therefore seem more lifelike. Wherever the statue passes, it is warmly greeted by clapping and cheering. Every so often, the bearers stop and the statue is rested on *il-lasti tal-furċina* (poles with huge prongs on which the poles passing underneath the statue and carried on the bearers' shoulders are rested). This provides the opportunity for the people lining the streets and the balconies to gaze more closely at the statue and comment on its beauty, the wealth of its jewels, the flowers adorning it. Comparisons with other statues can also sometimes be overheard. The procession is accompanied by the sporadic explosion of petards before sunset and afterwards, of fireworks ('*murtali tal-ftuħ*' [a firework which breaks out into a shower of coloured sparks]).

Although the order of the procession is highly structured, some parishes create certain distinctive features within their celebration. In Valletta, the statue of St Paul is turned to



*Il-fratelli tal-ġilu kburin igorru l-vara*

face the sea at every street corner, and upon its arrival at St John's Cathedral, it is taken up the steps of the Cathedral and the passage from the Acts of the Apostles concerning the arrival of St Paul to Malta is read out, reminding the participants that it was the saint who gave the Maltese their faith. Formerly, in L-Isla, as the statue of the Virgin Mary (known as *il-Bambina*) was paraded along the waterfront, it used to be lit up by the ships in Senglea Creek which would direct their powerful beams on to it, creating a magical effect as the statue's silver painted garments sparkled in the aura of intense light surrounding it<sup>34</sup>. All the different variations are seen as bestowing added importance to the patron saint. The statue becomes the supreme expression of the community, and in fact it remains in the streets after the rest of the procession has returned to the church. As the statue comes closer to the church, the space around it is appropriated by the revellers, who sing, jump and dance around the statue, integrating it into the festive space created by their merrymaking, making it even more the focal point of their joyous celebration. In various localities, during the last part of its journey back to the church, the bearers hand over the statue to the men flocking around who yearn to carry it, even if for a short distance, and men replace each other in succession under the poles to carry the statue back to the church, before handing it back to the bearers. At that point, the communal feeling of identification with the saint becomes even more intense. It finds verbal expression in the poems that are created by young men who climb on to their friends' shoulders to recite them to the saint and the community, and by the women standing in front of the statue praising the saint. This moment marks a peak of outdoor collective celebration, which reaches its crowning glory with the '*kaxxa infernali*'. This is set off after the bearers have climbed the steps leading to the church door. There they stop, and the statue is turned to face the crowd and watch the last fireworks, a final ostentatious explosion of colour and celebration, before the final entry into the church. Later that evening, the *marc tal-aħħar* (last march) is organised by and for the men who have been letting off fireworks during the procession.

The last solemn celebrative moment occurs within the church, and is a manifestation of the community's unity and oneness, which has been underlined and reinforced all through the process of celebration. This is marked by the singing of the '*antifona*', which is sung together with the tenors and the orchestra that have been waiting inside the church. The explosion of song is the final expression of collective celebration, and is often experienced as an intense and moving moment, sung by many with tears in their eyes, where the community is bringing the *festa* to a triumphant if regretful end. It is followed by the *Tantum Ergo*, a Eucharistic hymn sung at the conclusion of the celebrations just before the solemn benediction is given; in some parishes, the first notes are the signal for a large part of the congregation to leave the church.

As we have seen, the celebration of the saint is a way for the community to honour itself. The *festa* gives rise to a whole series of activities, linked both to indoors and outdoors, which produce the spectacular effects that it is immediately associated with in the minds of one and all. Not all communities celebrate their *festa* with the same

<sup>34</sup> Wilfred Kenely, *Festa ta' Marija Bambina, L-Isla*, personal communication.

intensity, but within each community there is a core group of people for whom the festivity constitutes a basic factor in their *raison d'être*, and even those who are less directly involved would never envisage a total absence of celebration. Symbolically, the saint denotes and reaffirms the community's distinctiveness, and in spite of the fact that religious fervour is on the wane, the *festa* is still a focal point of Maltese community life, precisely because its significance is firmly anchored within the community's social identity.

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## Sommarju

Żmien il-festa huwa wieħed importanti u huwa ċ-ċentru li fuqu ddur il-ħajja parrokkjali. Għalkemm il-festa tiġi f'unur il-patrun/a tal-parrocċa, matulha l-kommunità tiċċelebra lilha nnifisha, filwaqt li tkabbar il-prestiġju tagħha. Dan l-istudju janalizza l-festa bħala avveniment teatrali, b'mod partikolari jiffoka fuq l-aspetti ta' esibizzjoni u ċelebrazzjoni. L-istudju juri kif l-ispazji ta' kuljum jinbidlu u jsiru spazji barra mill-ordinarju u jelenka sinjali esterni ta' festa. Dan sabiex jippenetra livelli differenti ta' tifsir matul dawn iċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet. Permezz tal-festa, in-nies tal-lokalità jirrijaffermaw l-identità komuni tagħhom u jsahħu r-rabtiet tal-komunità.



### Nota Bijografika

Vicki Ann Cremona hi Associate Professor fid-Diviżjoni tal-Istudji Teatrali gewwa l-Istitut tal-Istudji Mediterraneani fl-Università ta' Malta. Sal-2004 hi kienet il-Koordinatur Akademiku tal-Programm tal-istudji teatrali. Fl-2005 inħatret Ambaxxatur ta' Malta għal Franzia u prezentament isservi ta' Ambaxxatur għat-Tuneżija. Hi kkontribwiet għall-Politika Nazzjonali Kulturali li ġiet ippubblikata fi Frar 2010. Fil-passat serviet ta' membru fuq il-Kummissjoni Nazzjonali tal-UNESCO u l-Kummissjoni Nazzjonali tal-Folklore. L-interess tarriċerka tagħha jiffoka l-aktar fuq ir-relazzjoni bejn il-poter u s-soċjetà kif espressi fit-teatru u l-avvenimenti teatrali. Kitbet diversi xogħlijiet dwar iċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet pubblici f' Malta, b'mod specjali l-Karnival, teatru politiku, u l-*commedia dell'arte* fis-Seklu Sbatax.

## *Festa Saints and Fireworks: Harsa fuq medda ta' snin 1960-2010*

*Jeremy Boissevain*

Fl-1983, antropologista Kanadiż osserva li ‘*new celebrations are being created and older ones revived on a scale that is surely unmatched in human history*’.<sup>1</sup> Dak li osserva żgur japplika għal Malta fejn jiġu ċelebrati xejn inqas minn mitejn festa reliġjuža fis-sena. Dawn il-festi jinkludu kemm ritwali reliġjuži kif ukoll ċelebrazzjonijiet pubblici kkuluriti u fuq skala kbira. Mill-festi kollha, dawk f’isem il-qaddisin tar-raħal huma l-aktar popolari. Huma jipprovdu l-iżvog pubbliku prinċipali fir-raħal, u għamlu hekk għal bosta sekli.

Il-festa jew festi annwali huma aktar minn festi reliġjuži f’isem il-patrun u ċelebrazzjoni ta’ ferħ. Hi espressjoni tal-identità soċċali u ġeografika tal-komunità li tkun qed tiċċelebra, kemm jekk hu l-każin tal-banda, il-partit tal-festa, il-parroċċa u/ jew ir-raħal. Il-festa hi xi ħażja li l-membri tal-komunità jistennew b’herqa u jħejju għaliha b’mod volontarju għal xħur sħaħ. Il-fama u il-prestiġju tal-komunità tistieħ fuq dan is-suċċess.

Irrispettivavent mid-data liturgika ta’ meta taħbat il-festa, illum kważi kollha huma ċċelebrati fis-Sajf. Dan biex jaċċerta li t-temp ħażin ma jħassarx it-tgawdija tal-armar u n-nar. Eluf ta’ turisti u Maltin iżzuru r-raħal fil-festa biex igawdu l-festi. L-udjenza Maltija għandha f’moħħha ideat čari ta’ x’jgħamel festa suċċess. Xejn minn dak li jaraw ma’ jaqbeż il-kritika tagħhom, ghaliex minbarra li jmorru biex igawdu l-festa, ikunu hemm ukoll bħala kritiċi. Huma jiflu u jiżnu t-tiżżejjen fil-knisja, il-mixegħla tat-toroq, in-numru, daqs u talent tal-banda lokali jew mistiedna, l-ammont ta’ nies għall-festa – li jinkludi l-ammont ta’ xarabanks għat-turisti pparkjati f’xi bajpas – u l-aktar, il-qwantità, kwalità u ritmu ta’ ħruq tan-nar. Dan kollhu jqabbluh mal-festa tagħhom u ta’ oħrajn. L-unur tal-komunità jorbot ma’ dan il-ġudizzju. Dan hu fattur li jikkonċerna lir-raħal kollhu, u l-komunità jew każin jingħaqad biex jippreżenta prodott mill-aqwa quddiem il-barrani.

F’dawn l-aħħar ħmistax-il sena ffit jidher li kien hemm tibdil fir-ritwali tal-festi ta’ ġewwa. Għall-kuntrarju, il-festi aktar brijuži u teatrali ta’ barra kibru bil-kbir. Dan hu parżjalment frott taż-żjieda fin-numru ta’ każini tal-banda – il-forza wara ċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-festa. Fl-1960 kien hemm madwar ħamsin każin tal-banda f’Malta u Għawdex. Sal-2010 dawn telgħu għal tlieta u tmenin. Aktar sinifikanti hi ż-żjieda fil-proporzjon ta’ rħula b’żewġ jew aktar każini tal-banda. Fl-1960 kien hemm biss wieħed minn kull tlett irħula b’żewġ każini tal-banda jew aktar (dsatax jew 34.5 fil-mija tan-numru totali). Sal-2010 dan il-fenomenu tela’ għal aktar minn nofs il-komunitajiet (seba u għoxrin jew disa u erbghin fil-mija tal-ħams u ħamsin raħal jew belt). L-akbar

<sup>1</sup> Manning, F.E.. 1983. ‘Cosmos and Chaos.’, in F.E. *The Celebration of Society*. Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, p. 4.

kompetizzjoni u pika tinsab f'dawn il-komunitajiet. Il-kompetizzjoni hi l-mutur li twassal għal żjeda fil-kobor, sbuñija u innovazzjoni tal-festi Maltin.

Minbarra ż-żjeda fin-numru ta' kažini tal-banda, il-kobor tal-manifestazzjonijiet jidher ukoll f'erba' fatturi oħra. L-ewwel, il-festi ta' barra twalu. Fl-1960 kienu jdumu tlett ijiem (l-aħħar jum tat-tridu, lejlietha u nharha). Illum iddum ġimġha sħiħa. It-tieni, it-tiżjin fit-toroq sar aktar elaborat u litteralment ha dimensjonijiet ġganteski. Fis-snin sittin l-umbrellel u l-juni simboliċi fil-marċi kienu jingarru fl-idejn. Illum dawn u s-sorpriżi saru ġganteski u jingarru fuq karrijet. It-tielet element hu dak dwar il-marċ ta' filgħodu (jew ta' nofsinhar f'xi rħula) li wħud minnhom anke bdew fis-snin erbgħin u nfirxu u saru storbjużi ferm. Fl-aħħar nett, id-daqs u kwalità tan-nar żdied ferm mis-snin sittin.<sup>2</sup>

## In-Nar

Għal hafna spettaturi n-nar hu l-aktar aspett eċitanti u drammatiku tal-festa. Is-subien għandhom kilba partikolari għan-nar, u Malta mhix eċċeżżjoni. Wara l-festa tarahom iħuffu fl-għelieqi minn fejn ikun inħaraq in-nar, bħal *crows* fl-għelieqi tal-qamħ wara l-ħasda sabiex isibu biċċiet mhux sploduti. Hafna minnhom jiġiċċaw involuti fil-manifattura tan-nar. Joseph Theuma, President tal-Għaqda Piroteknika li n-namra tiegħi man-nar bdiet b'dan il-metodu. Oħra jn-nar sostnew miegħi li taħdem in-nar tagħtik sens ta' kunfidenza fik innifsek. Peress li hu xogħol perikoluż, sħabhom iħarsu lejhom b'ċerta rispett. Filwaqt li kemm irġiel kif ukoll n-nisa jieħdu sehem fil-varji aspetti tal-festa, in-nar hu dominat mill-irġiel.

Għall-eluf li jżuru l-festi kull sena n-nar jilgħab element importanti minn kull festa. Anke d-DVDs tal-festi jiddedikaw proporzjon kbir għan-nar. Dak tal-festa tal-Madonna tal-Ġilju għas-sena 2006 pereżempju fih 198 minuta li minnhom 113 (jew 57 fil-mija) hu dedikat għal-intervisti u filmati marbuta man-nar.

## Periklu u Storbju

Il-manifattura tan-nar hi ta' periklu kbir. Bejn l-1980 u l-2010 ħamsa u sebghin persuna mietu f'Malta u Għawdex b'dan id-delizzju – rata ta' 2.4 mwiet fis-sena.<sup>3</sup> Fl-2010 għaxar persuni mietu bin-nar. Ir-rata medja ta' 14.8 incidenti kull miljun persuna hi waħda mill-ogħla fil-Mediterran.<sup>4</sup> Aktar minn hekk, 19 fil-mija tal-persuni korruti jew mejta bin-nar kellhom sittax-il sena jew anqas.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Matul it-tmint ijiem tal-festa massimu ta' seba' sigħat ħruq ta' nar tal-ajru hu permess. Id-dijametru tal-murtali ma jistax ikun aktar minn 15-il centimetru (uħud kellhom dijametru ta' 25 centimetru) u n-nar tal-art irid jiġiċċa sas-1 ta' filgħodu (Legal Notice 243, 1998). Fl-2010 saru restrizzjonijiet governattivi oħra li naqqsu d-dijametru tal-murtal minn 15 għal 12-il centimetru.

<sup>3</sup> Bartolo, E. 2010. ‘Highest number of deaths by fireworks in the last 30 years’. MaltaToday. <http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/print/3548>.

<sup>4</sup> Kummissjoni Ambjent (2006) *L-Impatt Ambjentali tal-Festi Maltin*. Malta: Kummissjoni Ambjent, Arċidjoċesi ta' Malta., p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Kważi tmintax fil-mija ta' dawn l-inċidenti kienu marbuta mal-ħażna jew manifattura illegali tan-nar, u 56 fil-mija ġraw matul il-preparamenti tan-nar fil-kamra, filwaqt li 4 fil-mija biss ġraw waqt il-ħruq. Nies irresponsabbli li jħuffu fil-kamra fil-ġranet ta' qabel il-festa wkoll joħolqu diversi riskji.

L-infurzar strett tar-regolamenti tan-nar dejjem kien ta' uggħi ta' ras. Il-murtali faċli jiġu sparati minn għelieqi remoti fl-irħula. Fl-1961 pulizija stazzjonat fir-raħal ta' Hal Kirkop qalli li xi ħadd kien infurmahom biex ma jindaħlux għaliex il-kanen tal-murtali jistgħu 'accidentalment jitmejlu' u jweġġgħu lil min ikun fil-vičinanzi. Fl-istess żmien Dun Benny Tonna, li aktar tard sar Monsinjur u Arċipriet tar-Rabat qalli li kien sema' li dilettanti tan-nar fir-Rabat kien armaw trakk mimli ramel bil-kanen fi sabiex iduru mar-Rabat u jaħarqu n-nar mill-madwar.

Sors ta' koriment hu l-element tal-kulur kemm fin-nar tal-ajru u kemm f'dak innovattiv tal-art. It-taħlit tal-kimika hu proċess instabbi ferm. Minkejja l-faxxinu

u popolarità ta' spettakli kuluriti kemm tal-ajru kemm tal-arti, jidher li l-Malti għandu faxxinu speċjali għal nar li jagħmel l-istorbju. Din kienet il-konklużjoni ta' studju li sar bejn 1996 u 1998 qalb 23 kamra tan-nar.<sup>6</sup> Din il-preferenza ta' storbju fuq sbuħija estetika hi sors ta' irritazzjoni u toħloq ġertu tensjoni soċjali. Għalkemm ħafna mill-ħoss tan-nar hi anqas minn dak li jista' jikkawża ħsara lis-saħħha tal-bniedem, kien hemm kaži meta dawn il-livelli nqabżu. Uħud mill-murtali, bombi u kaxxa infernali li



*Jeremy Boissevain iżomm murtal flimkien ma' mgħalleml tan-nar Koppi fis-snin sittin*

jinħarqu fil-ħruġ, transalazzjoni u lejliet u nhar il-festa joħolqu impatt ta' ħoss qawwi bżżejjed (120-130 DBA) li jistgħu jagħmlu ħsara fis-smiġħ.<sup>7</sup>

L-aktar li jistgħu isofru mhumiex l-abitanti tal-madwar iżda aktar l-istess nies li jkunu fl-għalqa jaħarqu n-nar, u dawk li qishom mejda tal-qubbajt, isegwu n-nar kemm tal-art kif ukoll tal-ajru f'kull festa. Hemm kategoriji ta' nies li huma vulnerabbli bħal nisa tqal, tfal żgħar u trabi, l-anzjani u xi annimali. Il-Kummissjoni Djoċesana dwar l-Ambjent innutat ukoll li l-impatt qawwi tan-nar jiġi jagħmel ħsara lil pitturi u dekorazzjonijiet fil-knejjes. Tgħid ukoll li l-madwar 200 tunellata ta' kimika tan-nar li tinharaq kull sena tista' wkoll toħloq effetti tossiċi li wieħed irid jistudja. F'dan ir-riġward il-ġigġifogu hu partikulari. Mhux darba jew tnejn li jiena wkoll iffurmajt parti mill-folla ftit metri biss bogħod mill-irdieden jiffurmaw disinji b'kuluri fantastiċi u ħsejjes li jtarrxu, filwaqt li lkoll ninksew b'foga li ma tkallikx tara u duħħan li jifgak.

F'tentattiv sabiex jikkontrolla l-esagerazzjoni u l-inċidenti tan-nar, il-gvern kemm fl-1998 u anke fl-2010 għamel kontrolli fuq id-daqs tan-nar u anke l-ħinijiet tal-ħruq. Il-knisja wkoll ilha snin imħassba dwar ġerta esagerazzjonijiet fil-festi. Fl-1935 għamlet

<sup>6</sup> Bondin, M. (1999) The Feasibility of Setting up a Fireworks Factory. Teżi mhux pubblikata tal-BA (Hons) Accountancy. Università ta' Malta.

<sup>7</sup> Tandon 2003 f'Kummissjoni Ambjent 2006, p. 5.

serje ta' regolamenti biex trażżan il-festi sekondarji.<sup>8</sup> Fl-2002, l-Arċisqof ħareġ digriet ieħor biex jillimita l-festi esterni u sabiex iġib lura d-dekor u jnaqqas il-pika. Hafna minn dawn però gew injorati. Fl-2006 il-Kummissjoni Ambjent tal-Knisja ippubblikat studju dwar l-effett tal-impatt tal-ħoss u skart tossiku li n-nar jista' jiġgenera.

Aktar tard, sabiex tirrestawra id-dimensjoni reliġjuża tal-festa u tnaqqas il-pika, fl-2009 il-Kurja ħarget sett ta' regoli aktar stretti biex tikkontrolla l-kompetizzjoni: imponiet kodiċi ta' lbies, ordnat li tieqaf kull attitudni mhux xierqa fil-marċi – l-aktar f'dak ta' filgħodu – u pprojbiet is-sorpriżi u kwalunkwe żjieda fl-armar ta' barra wara s-sena 2013.<sup>9</sup> Dawn il-proposti qajjmu kjass shiħ u kif nista' nifhem, għadhom qed ikunu diskussi.<sup>10</sup>

## In-nar bħala timbru soċjali

In-nar hu wkoll fattur ta' distinzjoni soċjali. Bla dubju hu perikuluż u storbjuż. Il-ħoss jinvadi s-sensi, però hu wkoll parti mill-kultura Maltija. Jaqsam ukoll il-pajjiż bejn dawk li jħobbu u dawk li jobogħdu. Iż-żewġ gruppi ma jħalluhiex lixxa lil xulxin.

Matul l-istaġun tal-festa l-gazzetti bl-Ingliż, l-aktar *The Times* ikollha diversi ittri, u editorjali jgergru kontra l-ħsejjes. Dan ilu sejjer hekk żgur sa minn meta jiena kelli l-ewwel kuntatt ma Malta fl-1956. Ftit kien r-risposti sodi lejn din il-kritika u nhoss li hemm żewġ raġunijiet għal dan. L-ewwel raġuni hi li ħafna minn dawk li telgħu fil-kultura tan-nar l-aktar fin-nofsinhar ta' Malta mhux dejjem huma konxji ta' dak li jkun qed jinkiteb fil-gazzetti bl-Ingliż. Eżempju klassiku hu li ġewwa Hal Kirkop fl-2004 l-ebda gazzetta bl-Ingliż ma kienet tinbiegħ. Il-gazzetti bil-Malti huma eqreb lejn dak li qed jiġri fil-ħajja tal-irħula tagħna u l-kultura tan-nar.

*It-Times (of Malta)* hi l-aktar gazzetta preġudikata favur dawk li jgergru kontra n-nar u dawk li japprezzaw in-nar. Il-każ li ser insemmi dwar kif kien rapportat inċident fatali f'Hal Kirkop fl-1992 hu prova ta' dan il-preġudizzju.

Fl-1 ta' Ġunju 1992 *The Times* ġabet storja tal-isplużjoni f'kaxxa żgħira fil-faċċata b'rapport ta' 160 kelma. Fl-istess jum l-Orizzont ħabbar l-inċident b'titli kbar fuq quddiem, ritratt tal-kamra li taret u storja ta' 4000 kelma li ksiet tliet kwarti tal-paġna ta' quddiem u parti mill-paġna ta' warajha. Tliet ġimġħat wara, b'referenza għal dak li ġara f'Hal Kirkop u wkoll il-mewt li seħħet fil-15 ta' Ġunju f'Haż Żebbuġ fl-istess żmien ippubblikat karikatura ta' raġel jisplodi, b'imsarnu jinfaqgħu qalb in-nar u titjur ta' stilla.<sup>11</sup> Magħha kien hemm poežija li tgħid:

<sup>8</sup> Dawn stipulaw li għal festi sekondarji m'għandux ikun hemm Transulazzjoni tar-Relikwija lejliet il-festa u li l-kniċja biss u l-pjazza jistgħu jiġi mixgħula kif ukoll li banda waħda biss lejliet u oħra nhar jkunu permessi. Barra trażżeen fin-nar kien hemm ukoll d-direzzjoni li kull xogħol ta' arti introdott fil-kniċja għal festa sekondarja għandu jkun anqas ta' preġju u spiżza minn dak tat-titħarrar. (*Concilium Regionale. 1935. Decreta (Malta: Empire Press, 1936, p. 91).*

<sup>9</sup> Archdiocese of Malta. 2009. *Nirrestawraw il-Festi Flimkien*.

<sup>10</sup> Ara eżempji f'*Times of Malta*, 5 u 6 ta' Ottubru 2009.

<sup>11</sup> *The Sunday Times*, 21 ta' Ġunju 1992, p. 11.

## IT'S FESTA TIME AGAIN

Such fun to see the petards  
*As they light up the sky,*  
*And hear our babies screaming,*  
*And watch our young men die.*  
*What joy to make oblation*  
*As pagans did of yore ...*  
*Perhaps the tragic mother*  
*Stands proud in her son's gore!*

Irrabjat bl-insensittività tal-kummentarju, jiena ktibt ittra lill-editur li giet ppubblikata ġimġha wara b'kumment editorjali magħha.<sup>12</sup>

*Sinjur, għal darba oħra l-ġurnal tiegħek reġa' wera l-pregudizzju ta' klassi u l-injoranza grassa fejn jidħlu l-valuri tal-qarrejja, li jikkostitwixxu l-maġgoranza f'dan il-pajjiż. ... Li tissuġġerixxi li l-omm ta ... xi vittma tan-nar ‘perhaps... stands proud in her son's gore’ hu disgustanti. Inħoss li dan jitlob apoloġija minnek lill-familjari tal-vittmi u lill-qarrejja aktar intelligenti tiegħek.*

Naxxar

J. BOISSEVAIN<sup>13</sup>

Nota Editorjali: ... Il-karikatura ta' nhar il-Hadd kienet intiża li tiġbed l-attenzjoni għal mentalità li – minkejja diversi tragedji simili – tibqa tippersiti, u mhux biex titfa' xi dell fuq il-familjari taż-żewġ vittmi. Jekk b'xi mod tajna din l-impressjoni, jiddispjaċina ta' dan. Minkejja dan, ma' nistgħux nifhmu fejn jidħlu ‘l-preġudizzju klassista’ jew ‘l-injoranza tal-valuri’.<sup>14</sup>

Jien ma ergajtx weġibt lil editor però l-effett li xtaqt intlaħaq – dak li nippovoka lil dawk li jħobbu n-nar li jqumu minn hemm u jiktbu. Persuna minn post lejn innofsinhar ta' Malta kitbet ittra li kien fiha l-ħsieb u anke argumenti sodi.

Sinjur – ningħaqad mal-Professur Jeremy Boissevain ... fir-rabja tiegħu dwar il-karikatura li ppubblikajtu ... L-aktar li ssorprendien kienet in-nota editorjali ... Ma nafx meta l-ġurnal tagħkom ser jirrealizza li n-nar hu parti mill-kultura tagħna u li l-ħdim tan-nar mhu xejn ghajr estensjoni tal-kultural ta' riskju komuni tant fi żmienna? Hi kontinwazzjoni ta' delizzji riskjuži bħat-tlielaq tal-karozzi ... tixbit ma' muntanji, qbiż bil-parachute... u attivitatiet oħra simili.

<sup>12</sup> *The Sunday Times*, 28 ta' Ĝunju, 1992.

<sup>13</sup> SIR- Once again your paper has displayed its class bias and its appalling ignorance of the values of its non-readers, who form the overwhelming majority in this country. ... To suggest that the mother of ... any fireworks victim “perhaps ... stands proud in her son’s gore” is sick. You owe the bereaved families and your more intelligent readers an immediate apology. Naxxar - J. BOISSEVAIN

<sup>14</sup> *Editor's note: ...[The] cartoon last Sunday was intended to draw attention to a mentality which - despite these and similar tragedies - alas persists, and not to cast any reflection on the two victim's families. If any such impression was given, it is sincerely regretted. We wonder, however, where our "class bias" and "ignorance of values" comes in.*



Il-karikatura li dehret fis-Sunday Times tal-21 ta' Ĝunju 1992, p. II.

Il-karikatura tagħkom ippruvat tikkundanna attivită riskjuža prattikata minn ġertu klassi ta' nies li ħafna minnhom qatt ma ħabblu rashom jixtru l-ġurnal tagħkom. Attivitajiet tant ieħor riskjuži però sponsorizzati minn sezzjonijiet wisq aktar b'saħħithom fis-socjetà qatt ma jiġu kundannati u ħafna drabi jiġu appoġġjati.

Dak li l-ġurnal tiegħek ma jistax jifhem hu li meta tippruvaw toħolqu antipatija lejn innar tkunu qed toffendu l-eluf ta' Maltin u turisti li jiffullaw fil-festi u l-oħrajn li jimlew l-irħula tal-madwar bil-karozzi biex isegwu spettakli mill-isbah.

Jalla l-Mulej iżomm idejh fuq dawk li jaħdmu n-nar u jċaqlaq lill-Gvern sabiex jipprovdi tagħlim u jgħinom filwaqt li jinforza l-ligi.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> SIR - I would like to join Professor Jeremy Boissevain ... in his anger at your cartoon...What surprised me was the editorial note. ...When is your paper going to realise that fireworks are part of our culture and fireworks-manufacturing is an extension of "risk" culture so prevalent in our times? It is a continuation of the risk-oriented car racing, ... mountain-climbing, parachute free-falling ... activities. Your cartoon tried to condemn a "risk" activity undertaken by a certain class which most probably never bothered to buy your paper. Other "risk" activities, sponsored and financed by an influential section of society, are never condemned but very often lauded.... What your paper never realised is that trying to impose a certain antipathy to fireworks offends the thousands of Maltese and tourists who flock to the village festi and others who surround these villages with their cars waiting for a wonderful spectacle. May God help the fireworks manufacturers and move Government to teach and help them more effectively and enforce the law.

Tarxien -J.L. VELLA

It-tieni raġuni li minħabba fiha ftit jiktbu favur in-nar fil-gazzetti bl-Ingliz hu li l-livell ta' Ingliz f'hafna mill-irħula li jeċċellaw fin-nar mhux biżżejjed sofistikat biex il-aħħaq mal-argumenti ta' dawk li huma kontra. Ovvjament hemm eċċeżzjonijiet għal dan u s-sitwazzjoni qed tinbidel ma kull jum li jgħaddi. Iżda l-pattern qiegħed hemm. Mhiex biss kwistjoni tal-ħames sensi, però wkoll ta' klassi soċjali. Hafna minn nies minn nofisnhar ta' Malta li l-irħula tagħhom jeċċellaw fil-manifattura tan-nar ħadu l-edukazzjoni tagħhom fi skejjel tal-gvern fejn it-tagħlim isir bil-Malti filwaqt li anke fi djarhom jitkellmu bil-Malti. B'kuntrast dawk li ġejjin minn naħha ta' fuq ta' Malta l-fuq mil-linja Furjana – Rabat jinkludu ammonti akbar ta' professjonisti u familji tat-tajjeb li ġew edukati fi skejjel privati jew tal-knisja u li trabbew ikellmu lill-uliedhom u ħafna drabi lil xulxin bl-Ingliz.<sup>16</sup>

Il-pożizzjoni li ħafna nies jieħdu dwar in-nar hi martbuta ferm mal-kalssi. Nikkwota lil espert tan-nar Joseph Theuma mill-ġdid:

*Festi belong to the people, il-poplu. Especially the southern villages have a great firework tradition. Villages in the North have fewer factories and so many must buy their fireworks. Stella Maris spends about Lm7000 [Eur16,300] on fireworks. This is collected from working class persons - not from sinjuri [wealthy persons].'*

L-attitudi negattiva lejn in-nar fl-ittri fil-gazzetti għandha doża ta' preġudizzju ġegrafiku u ta' ġlieda ta' klassi. Bejn Marzu u Ĝunju 1965 u matul Awwissu 1967 ġbart 34 cutting minn the (*Sunday Times of Malta*) dwar in-nar. Tliet kwarti minnhom (26) kienu miktuba minn nies min-naħha ta' fuq ta' Malta. Minn dawn 22 kienu kontra n-nar. Huma jmaqdru lil dawk li jħobbu n-nar u jużaw lingwa degradanti u abbużiva u li turi biċ-ċar li huma jħossuhom superjuri, aktar edukati u nfurmati minn dawk li jaqblu man-nar. Ejja nisimgħu uħud minnhom:

*'Educated people in Malta do not enjoy stupefying themselves with bombs and petards'* (E.B., Valletta, 24 April, 1965);

*'How nonsensical it is to spend all that money on smoke!!!!'* (Veteran, Floriana, 22 August, 1967);

*'Mindless lovers of loud bangs'* (R.B., St. Julian's, 28 August, 1967);

*'Hitlerian way of thinking'* (J.P.V., Birkirkara, 28 August, 1967);

*'The minority of ignorant people who have no feelings for the sick, aged, children or animals'* (Citizen of Malta, Hamrun, 28 august, 1967).

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<sup>16</sup> Għal diskussjoni dwar il-prestige soċjali ta' diversi żoni residenziali f'Malta ara Boswell, D.M. (1994) *The Social Prestige of Residential Areas*. In: R.D. Sultana and G. Baldacchino (eds.), *Maltese Society. A Sociological Inquiry*. Malta: Mireva Publications. pp. 133-161.



*Imghallmin tan-nar jippużaw man-nar tal-ajru*

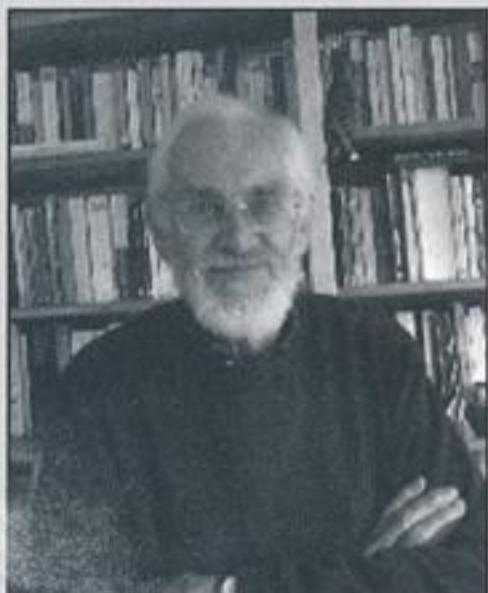
## Konklużjoni

L-impatt li jħallu l-kuluri, folol, briju, irwejjaħ, mužika, għajjat u splużjonijiet fuq is-sensi jiddependu ħafna mir-rwol tal-participant, jekk hux parruċċan jew viżitatur, Malti jew turist, participant attiv jew osservatur, mir-raħal jew mill-belt, jaħdem in-nar, jew idoqq il-banda, qassis jew lajk, Kattoliku jew Protestant, saċerdot fil-parroċċa jew fil-Kurja. B'metodi differenti, kollha huma effettwati. Il-ħoss tal-festa hu interessanti ferm. Huma marki soċjali u għan-nies tal-irħula kull tip ta' nar, mill-musketterija għalk-kaxxa infernali, l-bomba tas-salut u l-ġigġifogu, huma affarijiet familjari u komponenti essenzjali fil-festa. Iżda ħafna minn dawk li jqisu ruħhom elitisti u jitkellmu bl-ingliż iqisu dan kollu bħala metodi aggressivi u intrużjoni barbara, theddida li ġejja minn nies mhux edukati, injoranti u bla ħsieb. riżultat tal-insensittività tal-klassi tal-ħaddiema. Hafna jsejjħu l-festi bħala ‘manifestazzjonijiet pagani’.

Il-ħoss u sbuħija tan-nar, l-originalità fl-armar u l-briju fit-toroq maħluq minn numru dejjem jikber ta' żgħażaq nisa u rġiel li qed jidħlu għall-organizzar tal-festa huma xhieda tad-devozzjoni tagħhom lejn il-qaddis patrun tagħhom u l-każin li għaliex jiddedikaw tant sighħat twal ta' ħidma volontarja. Id-diversi regoli li l-awtoritat jiet qed jippruvaw idaħħlu biex inaqqsu l-pika u jagħmlu l-purċissjoni aktar dekoruża, jekk isehħu, jistgħu jnaqqru ferm mill-ispirtu kompetittiv u s-sodisfazzjoni li dawn in-nies jieħdu mill-ħidma tagħhom b'risq il-festa tal-qaddis tagħhom. Għadu jberren f'mohħi l-kliem ta' qassis Ĝiżwita rtirat u li jiena kont nirrispetta ferm għall-intelligenza tiegħu waqt li konna qed naraw il-marċ ta' filgħodu fin-Naxxar: “Dan hu l-unika rabta li ħafna miż-żgħażaq għandhom mal-knisja llum. Nehħhi dan u anke dik ir-rabta tispiċċa”.

## Abstract

During the past fifty years the scale of external celebrations of *festi* has increased markedly. The number of band clubs - the driving force behind the celebrations - has nearly doubled. The celebrations last longer, the decorations are more elaborate, there are more rowdy band marches and there are more varied, colourful and noisier fireworks. This escalation is driven by the endemic parochial rivalry and competition (*pika*) between band clubs. It is financially enabled by the rising national prosperity. Technically and media savvy young men and women are increasingly shouldering responsibility for planning, organizing and promoting the celebrations. The external *festa* celebrations continue to irritate the church authorities and the ever-louder fireworks infuriate the urbanized middle class. But noisy, rowdy and colourful *festi* are not just joyful celebrations. They express a deeply felt social and geographical identity and, as well, are a statement to parochial rivals and middle class suburbanites, that "Yes we are here".



### Nota Bijografika

Jeremy Boissevain hu Professur Emeritu tal-Università ta' Amsterdam. Bejn l-1953-58 huwa mexxa l-programmi CARE ġewwa l-Filippini, il-Ġappun, l-Indja, u Malta. Fl-1962 ingħata dottorat fl-antropologija soċjali mill-London School of Economics. Għallem ġewwa l-Universitajiet ta' Montreal, Sussex u Amsterdam. L-istudji tiegħi ġewwa Malta, Sqallija, Montreal u Amsterdam iffukaw fuq il-politika lokali, relazzjonijiet etniċi, intrapriżi żgħar, bidla fir-ritwali, u l-impatt tat-turiżmu u l-oġgezzjonijiet ambjentalistiċi. Fost il-publikazzjonijiet tiegħi insibu *Saints and Fireworks: Religion and Politics in Rural Malta* (1965, 1993); *The Italians of Montreal: Social Adjustment in a Plural Society* (1970); *Friends of Friends: Networks, Manipulators and Coalitions* (1974); *Hal Kirkop: A Maltese Village* (2006). Hu koeditur ta' *Beyond the Community: Social Process in Europe* (1975); *Revitalizing European Rituals* (1992); *Coping with Tourists: European Reactions to Mass Tourism* (1996); *Contesting the Foreshore: Tourism, Society, and Politics on the Coast* (2004). Fl-2003 il-Kunsill Malta għal-Kultura u l-Arti tah il-Premju Għarfien Kulturali u fl-2009 il-Kunsill Lokali ta' Hal Kirkop onorah bil-premju Merit of Kirkop għal-ħidma volontarja tiegħi qalb il-Koppin.

## Interventi, kummenti u domandi

### Intervent ta' Noel Galea – Sindku tal-Imqabba

L-ewwel nett kienet inizjattiva tajba u ta' min wieħed ifaħħar u ta' min wieħed isegwi. Hija xi ħażja importanti li llum qeqħdin niddiskutu f'dan is-seminar, imsemmi Il-Festi, Kultura u Identità, meta mbagħad fuq il-panel għandek rappreżentanza daqshekk tajba, rappreżentanza daqshekk wiesgħha, fejn kelna paper mis-Sinjorina Cassar flimkien ma' Dr Mark Anthony Falzon, Dr Vicki Ann Cremona u issa fl-aħħar il-Professur Jeremy Bossevain. Jiena qagħad niġbor naqra waqt li smajt tajjeb dak kollu li ntqal dalgħodu, il-fulcrum tad-diskussjoni kienet in-nar. Però mhux in-nar biss, kien hemm elementi oħra marbuta, però nqis illi n-nar kienet it-tema principali. Dak kollu l-intqal mit-tliet kelliema, u anke milli għidt inti Charles, hija verità, u qed ngħid li hija verità għax jiena personalment esperjenzajta. Kull min jafna mill-Imqabba, jiena għamilt żmien attiv fil-festa fl-Imqabba, esperjenzajt l-element tal-banda meta kont żgħir, għamilt kważi ħmistax-il sena naħdem in-nar ukoll, allura nista' nitkellem b'mod tangħibbi, meta titkellem fuq in-nar. Illum qed nara l-festi minn naħha ta' barra, minn naħha tas-sens politika għax illum qiegħed fil-Kunsill Lokali, però hija verità dak kollu li ntqal u dak kollu li kull kelliem semma' b'tant dedikazzjoni kull ħażja marbuta mal-festi tagħna. Is-soltu meta nisimgħu l-festi nitkellmu fuq il-marċi, fuq il-brijju, fuq dak kollu organizzat mal-festi, però dawn id-dettalji naħseb ftit minna qatt tajna kashom fis-sens li taw kashom il-kelliema tal-panel illum. Jekk semmew il-qniepen, jekk semmew il-ħoss tan-nar marbut ma' kull faži tal-festa, hekk kif semma tajjeb il-Professur Bossevain, il-kritika li ssir, jiena ngħid, ħafna drabi ingħustament kontra l-festi. Però, kultant ġertu affarijiet inħalluhom jiġu fuqna. Jekk aħna m'aħniex ha naħdmu b'għaqal, u hawnhekk nagħmel aċċenn għal dak li għidt inti fil-bidu, Charles, aħna ma ġejniex hawn biex nikkuraw il-festi għax il-festi mhumiex morda, anzi l-festi huma b'saħħithom ħafna, imma ġejna hawn biex filwaqt li nożżu dak li għindna sal-lum, inħarsu l-quddiem għal aktar snin ta' festi b'kultura u identità. U meta kont qed ngħid, jekk ma nagħtux kas dawn jistgħu jonqsu, nagħmel aċċenn għal li qal il-Professur Bossevain. Il-kritika li jkun hemm ftit minnha hemm bżonn nindirizzawa, mhux billi ngħidu dak ma jifhimx, jew dik ma tifhimx, però l-kritika qiegħda hemm, u l-kritika saret u kritika ingħusta jkun hemm ħafna bħal dawk l-artikli, kull wieħed u waħda minna jaqra minnhom. Ikun hemm artikli li huma fil-verità, però jkun hemm artikli li mhumiex daqshekk ġusti. Allura aħna rridu, u meta ngħid aħna mhux jiena jew il-presidenti tal-każini, qed ngħid aħna li nħobbu l-kultura u l-identità tal-festi. Aħna rridu li nindirizzaw dik il-kritika ingħusta u nindirizzawa mhux biss billi niktbu ħalli nagħmlu l-kontrokritika imma billi nħarsu lejna, aħna li norganizzaw il-festi u fejn hemm element li nistgħu nikkoreġuh jew nistgħu, kif qalu tajjeb ukoll, nimodernizzaw, fl-istess ħin imma nibqgħu marbuta mal-kultura u l-identità propja ta' kull festa, aħna nkunu qed nagħmlu l-ġid lill-festi tagħna. Nafu li hawn diversi elementi li fis-soċjetà jistennew anke l-inċident, bħal f'dik l-istampa li rajna ta' dik l-isplużjoni dik niftakara jien ukoll, dak iż-żmien kont għadni naħdem in-nar jiena, u veru baqgħet impressjonata ġo fija, mhux għax

kif kienet impengija, imma impressionatni fis-sens li min għamilha ried jitfa dell ikrah fuq il-qasam tan-nar, ried jitfa dell ikrah fuq il-festa, għax il-festa mhix biss dik il-ħaġa għalkemm jiġru, però l-festa hija kollox. Il-festa hija l-kultura, l-identità u jekk tipermettuli wkoll inżid il-qdusija li hemm marbuta mal-festi propja. Jekk narfu naħdmu bil-għaqal, jiena persważ, u nagħmel aċċenn għal li hemm miktab fil-poster tas-Socjetà Mużikali Madonna tal-Ġilju ‘lejn seklu ieħor ta’ devozzjoni’ mhux biss għall-festa tal-Madonna tal-Ġilju, imma tal-festi tradizzjonali Maltin.

### **Intervent ta’ Ignatius Farrugia**

Prosit lill-Kumitat ta’ din l-organizzazzjoni hawnhekk, għax hija xi ħaġa għall-ewwel darba li saret ġo Malta. Haqqhom prosit ukoll il-PRO għal kemm ħadem biex kien hawn dil-konferenza kollha. Jiena nagħti prosit ukoll ‘il panel, lilek Charles, bniedem intelligenti immens u Imqabbi illi kellek il-ħila wkoll issib lil dawn l-esperti. Laqtitni ħafna l-paper ta’ Christine meta semmiet li għalkemm hi mhijiex midħla tal-festi studjat nies illi jħobbu l-festi. U hekk għandu jkun u prosit Christine. Jiena mmur daqsxejn ‘il bogħod lejn il-Kurja u dan l-aħħar qed jinbena kumitat minn erba’ qassisin u Monsinjur illi sfortunatament ma tantx huma midħla tal-festi, jew inkella ma jħobbu il-festi jew ma ħadux pariri; Għaliex għandu jkun dan? Nies bħal Christine, li għalkemm mhix intiża fil-festi u ma trabbietx fl-ambjent tal-festi bħalma trabbejt forsi jiena u ħafna oħrajn bħali hawnhekk, studjat u saqsiet xi nhossu aħna, kemm sagħiċċu nagħmlu u kemm ġranet, xhur għal dik il-ġimġha festa illi nagħmlu aħna. Christine wkoll semmiet illi għalkemm mhix qariba ta’ persuna illi miet b’kamra tan-nar, attendiet il-funeral ta’ persuna li miet biex tkun taf xi jħossu l-qraba. U jiena hawnhekk insaqsxi wkoll li ħasra li d-dirigenti tal-Kurja ma ġewx hawn illum għal dan is-seminar. Haġa oħra illi rrid ngħid, illum il-ġurnata l-każini tal-baned tagħna, m’għadhomx just għax mort il-każin ħela ta’ hin, anzi, huma, bħal ma semmew ukoll il-panel, skola ta’ mužika, skola ta’ arti, isiru ħafna drama, isiru ħafna attivitajiet ġo fihom. Għalhekk, sinjuri ġenituri, ’i uliedkom ħegġuhom jattendu l-każin, għax illum il-każini ta’ Malta kollha saru centru ta’ kultura.

### **Intervent ta’ Patri Adrijanu Cachia – direttur spiritwali tal-każin tal-Ġilju**

Jiena bħala direttur spiritwali ta’ diversi każini tal-banda qiegħed hawn għax għalkemm hu seminar lajk, però, l-isfond religjuż qiegħed hemm bilfors u niġi mal-ewwel għal dak li għedt fuqi Sur Charles Farrugia, li jiena nhobb ngħid illi l-festi tagħna jibdew fil-knisja u jispiċċaw fil-knisja. Hekk għandu jkun, però, inżid ħaġa oħra li nhobb ngħid, il-festi tagħna ħolqithom il-knisja. Ma tistax il-knisja tiddistanzja ruħha minnhom. Kien hawn pajjiżi viċin, l-Italja, meta wara l-gwerra l-knisja ddistanzjat ruħha. Flok il-festi daħlu elementi oħra, mhux sa nidħol f’dawk il-partikolaritajiet. Il-knisja, anzi, għandha thossa tant responsabbi illi tifhem illi postha qiegħda hemm f’dak kollu. Jiena forsi ħafna jħarsu lejja, *I am one of the dying race* ta, jiġifieri, jiena t-tip bħali illum

mhux qed ikun hemm forsi tilgħin, tiela' xi wieħed minna l-Frangiskani, mill-ambjent tagħna tar-Rabat u tas-Sliema, is-Sacro Cuor specjalment fejn għandna elementi qawwijin, li nieħdu u nipparteċipaw u naħdmu ħa nżommu dak li hu tajjeb u nsaffu, kif jgħidu. Jiena miniex nikkritika l-Kurja. Kollha nħobbhom ta' Frangiskan li jien, imma niftħilhom għajnejhom, *it's an eye opener*. Ma niddistanzjawx ruħna mill-knisja, nibda mill-Arcisqof sa l-inqas wieħed li hemm fil-kleru, għax ma nistgħux naffordjaw. Il-poplu maħniex sa nikkonvertuh minn fuq il-pulptu llum biss. Il-pulptu importanti, imma isfel fit-triq, fit-triq ħa nikkonvertu aħna. Qed ngħid hekk għax inħoss. Prosit lil organiżaturi. Tagħmlu affarrijiet bi klassi. Nieħu pjaċir. Jien qiegħed Direttur Spiritwali fi tmien kažini mxerrdin ma' Malta u jekk jgħiduli ma ngħid le lil hadd u nsib ħin għal kullhadd, għax nemmen f'dan li qed ngħid jien. Kristu ssallab, bil-ġisem tiegħu ta' bniedem. Kieku ma kellux dak il-ġisem kieku m'għamel xejn. Dan hu l-ġisem tagħna aħna, ġisem Nisrani, identità Nisranija u kultura Nisranija.

### **Intervent mill-panel minn Dr Vicki Ann Cremona**

Jiena naħseb illi waħda mill-elementi fundamentali li qiegħda toħroġ anke fil-kummenti tat-tliet persuni li tkellmu hija l-problema ta' kontroll. U hawnhekk irridu nippuvaw nifhmu u nqegħduha f'kuntest nazzjonali ikbar. Għaliex il-problema ta' kontroll tidħol f'ħafna affarrijiet f'Malta, specjalment fuq livell reliġjuż u politiku. Jiġifieri meta aħna qiegħdin nitkellmu fuq min qiegħed jikkontrolla il-festa, irridu nitkellmu fuq liema aspett tal-festa qiegħdin niddiskutu. Għaliex? Għaliex il-festa hija propjament il-qofol fejn il-knisja u s-soċjetà jiġu flimkien. Miġbura flimkien fin-nom ta' qaddis. Però, il-fatt huwa li dawn l-elementi li huma ż-żewġ aspetti tal-festa, jekk aħna noħduhom fuq livell wieħed, huma elementi differenti ħafna, fis-sens li l-komunità, il-festa għaliha importanti għax qiegħda tiċċelebra lilha nnifisa. Permezz ta'din c-ċelebrazzjoni, qiegħda tqawwi lilha nnifisha, għax qiegħda taraf lilha nnifisha bħala komunità u b'hekk tatiha saħħa ġdida, impetu ġdid. Fuq il-livell ta' knisja, qabel kienet ukoll mod kif il-komunità tidħol fil-knisja biex targħa qisha tinforza l-fatt li hi parti minn dik il-knisja u dik il-knisja hija parti mill-identità ta' dik il-komunità. Il-problema hawnhekk issir wieħed ta' kontroll u Malta, sfortunatament, f'ħafna oqsma, meta nibdew nitkellmu fuq kontroll immorru f'estrem, minn estrem għal iehor, c̋joe, l-ewwel ħaġa meta aħna nitkellmu fuq element ta' kontroll, naħseb li l-importanti l-ewwel ħaġa hija d-diskussjoni man-nies li jagħmlu dawn l-affarrijiet, jiġifieri, fuq livell akademiku dak huwa parti mill-metodoloġija tagħna li inti ma tistax tikteb *paper* jew tagħmel riċerka jekk ma tmurx tkellem in-nies li jaħdmu f'dak il-qasam. Però, jiena personalment m'inċiex qiegħda ngħix Malta bħalissa għax qiegħda nirrappreżenta 'l Malta barra, jiġifieri ma nistax nitkellem fuq komunitajiet jew affarijet li qiegħdin isiru fil-Kurja jew min qiegħed fihom għax ma nafx. Però jekk veru hawn grupp ta' saċerdoti li qiegħdin jiddeċiedu mingħajr ma jintaqgħu wkoll man-nies li qiegħdin jagħmlu l-festa naħseb li dan huwa żball li jirrepeti ruħu f'ħafna oqsma f'Malta, mhux biss fuq il-livell ta' festa. Element iehor fuq livell ta' kontroll huwa, li l-kontroll sa-ċertu punt iġib poter. Issa f'komunità żgħira, u f'komunità kbira wkoll, il-poter huwa element importanti u jiena naħseb li f'Malta u Għawdex l-element ta' poter huwa mdaħħal ħafna fis-sens kwotidjan tagħna.

Čjoè aħna, pereżempju, wieħed mill-iktar pajjiżi li jiena naf li nitkellmu li l-politika hija element ta' diskussjoni kwotidjana tagħna. Aħna nitkellmu fuq il-politika kuljum u f'kull kuntest, anke f'kuntesti li wieħed mhux neċċesarjament jassoċċjahom mal-politika. Jigifieri, element ta' kontroll u element ta' poter huma t-temi li jiddominaw sa ġertu pont fil-ħajja kwotidjana tagħna. L-importanti, hu naħseb li hawnhekk irridu nagħmlu forsi, sa ġertu pont, forsi nitfġihu dawl ieħor fuq id-diskussionijiet tagħna huwa li dan l-element irid idaħħal element ieħor, li huwa element ta' dak li jagħmel, ta' azzjoni. Iktar minn kontroll ukoll, l-element t'azzjoni li qiegħda ssir narawha fil-kuntest tal-azzjoni biss ukoll u mhux nippruvaw noħorġuha f'kuntest ieħor li huwa l-kuntest ta' min qiegħed jikkontrolla dik l-azzjoni, imma nistudjaw l-azzjoni fiha nfusa u għalhekk ikunu nistgħu nibdew naraw kif din tista' tikber jew tieħu xejra oħra u tiżviluppa billi qiesna niffukaw fuqha biss. Naħseb li huwa importanti li ma nidħlux biss fiċ-ċrieki ta' kontroll, imma niefqu fiċ-ċrieki ta' azzjoni.

### **Intervent mill-panel minn Christine M. Cassar**

Naħseb l-ewwel ħaġa li kelli nagħmel jien u iktar b'mod li kif taħseb fiha, u naħseb din id-diskussjoni għandha bżonn ħafna iktar minn dan l-elment, hu li tieqaf tħares lejk bħala jien bħala r-riċerkatur jew riċerkatriċi u min jagħmel in-nar u min jorganizza l-festi tneħħi dik id-distinżjoni ta' qiesu 'aħna u huma'. Dik kienet l-ewwel pass li kelli nieħu jien imma kien pass li kelli nieħu tul ir-riċerka kollha. Dak li propja tpoġġi lilek innifsek fl-esperjenzi ta' nies differenti u hekk tifhem dak li qed jagħmlu u kif qed jagħmluh.

### **Intervent minn Dr Godfrey Farrugia**

Qabel xejn nixtieq nagħtikom proset vera mill-qalb. Qegħdin niddiskutu fuq livell akademiku u hija xi ħaġa sabiħa. Is-soltu niddiskutu minn aspetti ħafna differenti u sa naqbad l-aħħar kontroll tal-Professoressa fuq il-kontroll. Jiena nemmen li qabelxejn il-festi għandhom għeruq Insara u minsuġa fihom hemm l-identità ta' nazzjon Malta u din nemminha daqskemm jien inħossni bħala prodott mill-festi. Allura meta niġu għall-kontroll tal-festi, importanti li meta nitkellmu, niddjalogaw flimkien, irridu inqisu ruħna ilkoll rappreżentanti, huma min huma, bħala msieħba. Hadd m'għandu xi awtorità fuq ħadd. U b'hekk biss naħseb li nistgħu naslu. It-tieni punt li huwa kardinali u huwa importanti, illum l-edukazzjoni, għandha tkun l-ghoddha li biha nikkoreġu fejn ikun hemm skorettezza. Billi nimponu u noħolqu regoli u linji dixiplinari mhux sa naslu. Irrid ukoll inqajjem xi punti żgħar jien, li forsi ħadnihom *for granted* waqt id-diskussionijiet. Waħda minnhom huma l-każini, l-għaqdiet tan-nar u l-għaqdiet tal-armar. Dawn llum huma *NGOs* u anke rikonoxxuti mill-istat. Fihom kif intom esponejtu l-akbar parteċipazzjoni ġejja mill-klassi tal-ħaddiem iktar minn ħag' oħra hemm ġertu soċjetà li tmur, tersaq iktar lejhom. U dawn l-*NGOs* huma mibnija fuq il-volontarjat, fuq is-sens civiku. U dawn huma l-pilastri ta' dawn l-*NGOs*, il-volontarjat u s-sens civiku. U hawnhekk ma qiegħdiex nitkellmu, ha jkoll li nagħmel il-kuntrast għax issemmu', ma dawk il-klassijiet li jistmerru l-festi. Hawnhekk qiegħdn nitkellmu

fejn għandek il-qofol tas-soċjetà, li forsi ma tantx jaf jesprimi lilu nnifsu bl-lingwa Ingliza jew forsi ma jaqrax kollox bħala gazzetti bħalma ssemmew, imma fl-istess ħin il-patrijottiżmu fihom f'dak li għandu x'jaqsam is-sens ċiviku u il-volontarjat huwa minnug f'qalbom. U dan mhux fil-ġimġha tal-festa biss, imma fil-ġranet kollha, fit-tliet mijha u sitta u ħamsin ġurnata. U l-festa, biex inžid iktar ma fuq li qal Ignatius, parti mill-iskola tal-mużika eċċetra u dawk l-affarijiet, barra mill-festa fl-imhażen, fil-każini, hemm is-sens komunitarju tal-familja, hemm is-sens komunitarju fejn in-nies jiltaqgħu man-nies, fejn parti l-artiġjanat baqa' ħaj u ma mietx, imma hemm dik il-komunikazzjoni ta' kuljum fejn in-nies jitkellmu, x'gralhom fil-familja, x'gara fil-politika, min rebaħ futbol, min rebaħ hekk, hemm dak is-sens *of belonging*. U din hija xi ħaġa sabiħa. Semmejna n-nisa wkoll. Jien naħseb in-nisa llum għandhom rwol importanti ferm akbar milli l-kelliema esponew. L-ewwel ħaġa ssemmijhom, issibhom fit-tmexxija fl-eżekkutti stess ta' dawn l-istess għaqdiet. Illum hija xi ħaġa li hija *avant garde*, anke fl-istess statut ir-raġel u l-mara għandhom l-istess daqs. Hafna għaqdiet qiegħdin imorru anke 'l hemm milli jkollhom sezzjoni tan-nisa u sezzjoni tal-irġiel, imma s-sezzjoni tal-irġiel, ftit ftit, qiegħda tinffiltrat wkoll s-sezzjoni tan-nisa fiha. U n-nisa huma pilastri mhux biss fil-ġbir tal-flus jew fil-funzjonijiet soċjali, imma anke meta niġu għall-armar, meta niġu għad-drapp, għall-bandali, il-ħjata, ir-rakkmu. Illum anke narawhom fit-toroq waqt il-festi bil-forklifters isuquhom biex jarmaw. Jigifieri, is-saħħha tar-raġel m'għadiex biss minn dak l-element. Jiena midħla tan-nar, midħla tal-armar, midħla tal-banda. Fejn nipparkja jien fil-fabbrika tan-nar, hemm nisa, mhux l-ewwel darba, narahom iġorru l-kanen jew jieħdu ħsieb ġertu affarijiet tan-nar, jew jieħdu ħsieb ġertu affarijiet fil-fabbrika stess, ikollhom il-licenzji. Semmejna li kien hawn tlettax. Iva. Hawn ftit. Imma qiegħdin jiżdiedu. Imma l-mara r-rwol tagħha, anke mill-element maskili qed jiżdied ukoll parti minn tat-tmexxija. Il-kelma Maltija hija dilettant tan-nar. Jien dejjem kont xettiku dwara. Jekk irridu navvanzaw il-quddiem, irridu nħarsu lejn in-nar iktar bħala mgħallem tan-nar, iktar bħala artiġjanat tan-nar. Il-kelma dilettant jiena, għalija nirriserva għal dik il-persuna li jmur iħares l-hemm mill-ġħalqa tal-ħruq jew l-hemm mill-pjazza lejn in-nar. Huwa l-ispettatur innifsu, għax għandu dik il-ġibda lejh. Li qiegħed jiġi illum, u bis-saħħha tal-għaqda piroteknika u anka tal-Gvern, hija li f'din l-aħħar sena n-nar irridu nħarsu lejh iktar b'mod akkademiku, bil-*Health and Safety Standard*, fejn il-proċedura, fejn il-manifattura nnifisha trid issir, qiegħed iktar ikun mgħallem b'mod aħjar. U ta' min jgħid li n-nar f'kelma waħda huwa marbut mal-festa għax huwa l-messaġġier. Il-kelma messaġġier forsi hawnhekk ma ħarġitx daqshekk, imma aħna, għalinqas fit-toroq f'Haż-Żebbuġ ngħidu 'ara beda s-salut.' Mela dak is-salut jindika li bdiet dik il-funzjoni fil-knisja; huwa marbut il-ħin kollu bħala messaġġier. Inqasna wkoll insemmu dwar l-armar tal-brijju. Heqq, l-armar tal-brijju huwa parti integrali mill-marċ ta' filgħodu. Huwa parti mill-espressjoni ta' dik l-Għaqda. Dan hu armar totalment differenti mill-armar li nsibu fit-triq tal-purċissjoni għalkemm xorta għandu dawk it-temi religjuži u lokali. Fl-aħħar mill-aħħar in-nar, jiena nħares lejh mhux biss bħal artiġjanat imma bħala xjenza li fiha hemm il-fizika, hemm il-kimika, hemm ukoll l-inginerija u l-lum iktar minn qatt qabel it-teknoloġija digitali. In-nar, bħala kultura, fiha meta jiġi integrat anke l-mużika, qiegħed jesprimi

l-iktar talent, b'mod spontanju, li tuża l-ikbar liżar li ježisti, li huwa s-smewwiet, u bil-kuluri bħalma pittur bil-paletta jpingi xi haġa dak li jkun ispirat minnha fuq l-ikbar liżar, l-imgħallek tan-nar jesprimi lilu nnifsu, imħabtu u dak kollu li jkun inkarta fil-murtal tul is-sena shiħa biex l-ghada pitgħada joħorgu waqt il-ġranet tal-festa.

## **Intervent mis-Surmast Alfred Farrugia tal-Banda Queen Victoria taż-Żurrieq**

L-ewwel nett nifraħ lis-Socjetà tal-Ġilju ta' din l-okkazjoni illi għamlu dan is-seminar u nirringrazza lil-panel illi tkellmu tajjeb ħafna fuq is-suġġett tal-festa, però, inħoss illi hemm aspett li qegħdin ninjoraw mill-kultura u identità tal-festi tagħna, fejn ħa nalludi għall-baned Maltin stess. Apparti li ssemmew il-marċijiet li jsiru fejn qegħdin jinstemgħu kompożizzjonijiet Maltin, l-isfortuna hija li nistieden lill-kumitati tal-festi kollha li hawn hawnhekk, iduru dawra kemm ilhom joħorgu dawn il-pubblikkazzjonijiet tal-festi u jsibu li fil-programm li jtellgħu fil-festa jkollhom silta mużikali ta' kompożitor Malti. Issa jiena qed ngħid dan għaliex naf illi aħna fis-seklu dsatax Malta kienet strumentali ħafna anke fiż-żminijiet tas-seklu sittax kienet strumentali ħafna fl-iżvilupp mużikali ta' ħafna ta' madwar id-dinja kollha. Biżejjed insemmu lil Gerolimo Abos illi l-mużika tiegħu hija monument dinji u ħafna kompożituri oħrajn Maltin illi influwenzaw ħafna anke kompożituri u kkompetew ma' kompożituri kbar bħal Verdi u rebħulhom f'kompetizzjonijiet hekk. Issa l-punt tiegħi li ġej huwa dan, illi intom il-każini tal-baned illi iffurmajtu apposta għall-banda, x'aħna nagħmlu biex fil-festa tagħna nippreservaw il-kultura tal-mużika Maltija? Insibu illi minn programm ta' sagħtejn sħaħ ta' mużika ma ssibx biċċa mużika Maltija inkluża. U hawn nista nqajjem mistoqsijiet oħrajn ukoll imbagħad, għax l-isfortuna hija, illi ħafna nies li huma interessati fil-mużika Maltija ukoll, bħali li dejjem rajt li dejjem indaħħal biċċa mużika ta' kompożitor Malti, ma ssibx u diffiċli biex issib l-aċċess għal xi mużika partikulari li tkun tixtieq. Biżejjed insemmu bħalma huma mużika ta' Paolino Vassallo, ta' Carlo Diacono, *allright*, b'xi mod hemm min għamel patrimonju minnhom dawn u dan, meta dawn huma patrimonju nazzjonali. U jekk imorru fuq l-Internet, illum, u nidħlu fuq l-Amerka, fuq Russja, insibu li dawn qegħdin jippromwovu ħafna l-mużika tal-pajjiż tagħhom, li qegħdin itellgħuhom anke fuq Internet disponibbli għall-kulturi ta' madwar id-dinja kollha biex juru dak il-pajjiż x'joffra. Aħna minn naħha ta' Malta, aħna bħala anke stat, u minn hu responsabbli mill-kultura mużikali f'pajjiżna, x'inhu jagħmel biex jagħti dan l-aċċess għal din il-mużika, u barra minn hekk, kemm aħna il-baned, jekk mhux ha ndoqqu l-mużika tal-Maltin, x'ha jiġri mill-arkivji li għandna aħna ta' mużika antika, li sfortunatament, anqas għadna ntuhom iċ-ċans ukoll. Għaliex? Għax il-programmi li qegħdin isiru mill-baned illum, qegħdin indaħħlu ħafna kanzunetti, qegħdin ingħibu ħafna mużika ta' barra, qegħdin nixtru mużika ta' barra. Allura, aħna jekk għandu jkollna aċċess għall-mużika ta' Maltin, anke jekk inħallsu dik ix-xi haġa żgħira, imma jkollna aċċess għal dik il-mużika li hija patrimonju nazzjonali, m'għandniex għalfejn indaħħluha? Għandna mużika kbira, nibżgħu għaliha. Jekk irridu nagħmlu l-kuraġġ li Maltin jibqgħu jikbru fil-kultura

mužikali wkoll, irridu ntuhom dawn it-toroq fejn aħna, hemmhekk inkomplu insaħħu l-kultura u l-identità tagħna bħala Maltin anke fil-festi tagħna. Illum sfortunatament qed tintilef totalment, u jekk kien hemm istituzzjoni, li nirreferi għat-Teatru Manoel, li meta tmur, sa żmien li dħalna bil-banda tagħna nagħmlu programm hemmhekk, kienet obbligat li banda Maltija ttella' silta mužikali Maltija. Sfortunatament, dis-sena stess għadni kif attendejt kunċert ġewwa l-Manoel, imtella' minn banda Għawdxija, kellha *guests* barranin mužičisti magħha u sfortunatament ma smajtx silta ta' Malti. Jigifieri, ġibna l-barranin issa anke ġol-Manoel, meta konna qabel, konna qiesna obbligati li ntellgħu silta mužika, dan qed insemmu li minn sagħtejn mužika, tagħmel għaxar minuti dedikati lill-kultura ta' Malta, hija sfortuna li anke t-Teatru Manoel kelli jaċċetta din is-sitwazzjoni, u bħali li rajt nies preżenti hawnhekk li jistgħu jikkonfermaw dak li qed ngħid jiena, illi kienu qiegħdin preżenti hemmhekk ukoll f'dan il-kunċert. Nispera li jalla intom il-panel għandkom xi risposti għalina għal dawn fejn jidħol Stat, u kif nistgħu ngħinu aħna biex nagħmlu aċċess, aċċessibl iktar il-mužika Maltija, biex inkomplu nsaħħu l-kultura Maltija.

## Intervent minn Dr George Cassar

Xtaqt nagħmel riflessjoni fuq it-titolu stess ta' dan is-Seminar – Il-Festi: Il-Kultura u Identità.

Ha nibdew mill-festi. X'inhi festa? Festa hija manifestazzjoni, hija wirja, hija okkażjoni speċjali fejn komunità tiltaqa' flimkien, biex propju xxandar mument partikolari fil-ħajja tagħha.

X'inhi kultura? Kultura hija dik il-ġabra ta' affarrijiet, ta' sitwazzjonijiet, ta' ħsibijiet, ta' filosofiji, ta' projezzjonijiet li minnhom infishom jagħġi komunità, li din allura tiġi distinta minn komunità oħra.

U x'inhi identità? Identità hija propju dak li int int. Dak li int int differenti minn xi ħadd ieħor. Hija dak li lilek jiddistingwik minn ta' ħdejk.

Mela meta naraw il-festi fil-kultura u l-identità tagħhom, x'qiegħdin naraw? Qiegħdin naraw xi ħaġa, okkażjoni speċjali. Okkażjoni li tiddistingwik minn xi ħadd ieħor. U propju l-kelliema li kellna llum, b'mod tajjeb ħafna għandi ngħid, ippruvaw jgħaddu dal-messaġġ. Illi inti għandek sitwazzjoni fejn b'xi mod, fiha, qed tipprova tgħaddi dak li int int, b'modi differenti, anke bit-teatralita tagħha, anke bil-ħoss tagħha, anke bl-ispazzji illi tuża, anke bid-dekorazzjonijiet. Però, hawnhekk tiġi d-domanda allura. Aħna, nistgħu nibqgħu kif dejjem konna? Il-festi tagħna, nistgħu ngħidu kienu mod u għadhom l-istess? Pereżempju Patri Adrijanu qal ‘il-festi jibdew mill-knisja u jispiċċaw mill-knisja.’ Għandu raġun. Però r-realtà hi li l-knisja ukoll hija parti mill-komunità, li l-knisja hija wkoll magħmula minn nies, li dak li jsir ġewwa, li mbagħad l-istess knisja ħarġitu barra, storikament, illum sar tal-poplu. Mela r-realtà hi illi kull ħaġa qiegħda tevolvi. Il-festa m'għadiex festa reliġjuża biss jew purament reliġjuża, imma saret festa aktar miftuħha, aktar sekulari. U din irridu nifħmuha, li bdew deħlin elementi u huma importanti għax bil-mod il-mod juru żvilupp, illi minnhom infishom, qiegħdin joħolqu dejjem verżjoni gdida tal-festa Maltija. Kultant nikkundanaw ġerti żidiet, pereżempju, waħda mill-affarrijiet li dejjem nitkellmu fuqha hija, għaliex l-ikel

tradizzjoni fil-festi Maltin qed jispiċċa? Jien naf, il-qubbajt? il-pastizzi? pereżempju, u ndaħħlu l-hamburger u l-hotdog u l-pizza. Illum ħafna drabi jekk inti tgħid ħa mmur sa festa, lanqas tgħid ħa mmur nieħu biċċa qubbajt, jew ħa nixtri biċċa qubbajt, imma tgħid ħa mmur nieħu burger prattikament. Din hija parti mir-realtà però, illi l-globalizzazzjoni ma tistax taħraba. Mela għalkemm aħna qegħdin nitkellmu fuq festi u kultura, irridu nifhmu wkoll li l-kultura u l-identità Maltija qed jinbidlu wkoll maž-żminijiet tagħhom, u qegħdin jirriflettu dak li anke f'kulturi oħra qed jiġri. Mhijiex xi ħaġa tagħna din ghax ħafna drabi nikkundannaw lil Maltin qiesna ‘u le aħna sirna neokolonjalisti’, qegħdin nagħmlu dak li għamel ħaddieħor, imma ninsew li anke ħaddieħor qed jagħmel dak li nagħmlu aħna. Illum ir-realtà hi illi kollox qed jinbidel, u anke l-festi tagħna qegħdin jevolvu b'dan il-mod. Ma tfisirx li għandna nitilfuhom, imma għandna nkunu bil-għaqal u nifhmu illi filwaqt li noħolqu l-bilanċ meħtieg bejn dak li kellna u dak li qed jidħol fl-istess ħin noqogħdu attenti illi l-bilanċ jibqa' hemm u ma nesageraw f'xejn, inkluż fin-nar, inkluż fil-kontrolli, inkluż f'dak kollu illi hemm min igerger fuqu u hemm min jissapportjah. Il-bilanċ huwa kollox. Festa bbilancjata hija festa Maltija.

## Kummenti mill-panel minn Charles Farrugia

Nixtieq nagħmel ftit kummenti jiena għax kien hemm interventi interessanti ħafna. L-aħħar punt ta' Dr Cassar huwa fuq li kollox qed jevolvi u ħarġet naħseb tajba ħafna ukoll mill-kummenti ta' Dr Farrugia ukoll l-involviment tan-nisa fil-festa. Anke dawk tal-età tiegħi niftakru żmien meta n-nisa l-anqas biss kienu jistgħu jidħlu ġol-każin, anzi kien hemm żmien iktar gravi fejn min ma kienx soċju ma kienx jidħol fil-każin, jiġifieri, kellek l-ewwel il-każin għas-socju biss, imbagħad fetah il-każin għal kullhadd, imbagħad daħlu anke n-nisa bħala soċi u illum in-nisa parteċipi kompleti u hemm elementi ġodda qed jinbtu, dan l-aħħar kien hemm anke il-fenominu tal-*Junior clubs*, illi literalment kważi l-*kindergarten stage* tal-up-bringing fi ħdan każin. Issa aħna mhux qegħdin, nidħlu fuq kull tema u niddiskutuha, però, qegħdin nippruvaw insemmu l-aspetti kollha li huma ħafna. Kien hemm il-punt ukoll li semma Dr Farrugia tal-messaġier, sejjah żewġ punti interessanti tad-diletant u mgħallem. Hu nteressanti li aħna l-kelma dilettant ħarġet ħafna minn dak id-diskorsi, però interessanti dil-perspettiva ta' mgħallem u tal-messaġġier illi ssemmiet b'mod ieħor, fil-każ ta' Christine ma semmietx il-kelma messaġġier, qalet korjografu u li jagħti r-ritmu lin-nar jidħirli, il-kliem eżatt kien, li jagħti r-ritmu lill-festa anzi, in-nar jagħti r-ritmu lill-festa. Jiġifieri qegħdin fuq l-istess frekwenza u hu ferm interessanti li ħareġ dal-ħsieb komuni.

Il-punt tal-acċess tal-mużika li għamel Maestro Farrugia, huwa interessanti ħafna u *as an aside*, inħoss l-obbligu li ngħid kumment jiena wkoll fil-kariga issa tiegħi mhux fil-festi, fil-kappell li qiegħed liebes hawnhekk illum imma fil-kariga ta' Arkivista Nazzjonali, għax hija reallta vera illi l-acċess ghall-arkivji mużikali huwa problematiku. Huwa problematiku għal ħafna raġunijiet. Huwa problematiku minħabba l-aspett storiku, illi aħna hawn Malta ħafna mill-kollezzjonijiet, anke ta' dokumenti mhux mużika biss, jinsabu fi ħdan l-arkivji privati, fi ħdan il-Knisja u fi ħdan il-Gvern.

Voldieri fir-realtà, il-Gvern huwa l-inqas imsieħeb li għandu kollezzjonijiet mužikali. Hemm arkivji mužikali li huwa l-Arkivju tal-Katidral, li hawn fl-udjenza hawn minn hu iktar kompetenti minni biex forsi jikkummenta dwaru, fejn hemm kollezzjoni kbira ta' mužika u wieħed irid jesplora metodi kif dik il-mužika issir aktar aċċessibl u tinfetaħ iktar għal-pubbliku. Mil-banda l-oħra, is-sitwazzjoni mhijiex forsi kollha negattiva. L-element ta' biċċa mužika Maltija f'kull kuncert, żgur illi, almenu fis-Socjetà li qed torgenizza das-seminar Tal-Ġilju, żgur illi naħseb dawn l-aħħar 25 sena' għax naħseb kont dejjem kważi preżentatur jiena f'bosta mill-kuncerti, dejjem ikun hemm is-silta mužikali Maltija. U apparti mis-silta tal-kompożituri, dawn l-aħħar 20 sena wkoll Andrew Calleja li huwa is-Surmast li jikteb ghall-okkażjoni, naħseb li dejjem kien hemm silta oħra ta' mužičista Malti. Jekk tgħidli bizzżejjed? Ma naħsibx li bizzżejjed. Però, fil-kuncerti forsi *indoors* tal-Manoel, hemmhekk huwa l-aktar post propizju li tista' ddaħħal dik it-tip ta' mužika għax imbagħad hemm il-limitazzjonijiet l-oħra li kif tafu meta nagħmlu kuncert speċjalment lejliet il-festa tkun qiegħed tikkompeti ma' milljun elf oġgett, għandek il-ħin jiġri kontrik, għandek lil tan-nar iridu jibdew jaħarqu n-nar, għandek dik ir-realtà kumplessa kollha kemm hi. Dak naħseb minn naħha tiegħu kienu l-kummenti li xtaqt nagħmel.

### **Kummenti mill-panel minn Dr Vicki Ann Cremona**

Jiena minn naħha tiegħi fuq il-livell tan-nisa fil-każini naħseb li nkunu wettaqna dak li nkunu rridu meta naraw ugwaljanza totali bejn iż-żewġ sessi. Jekk nieħu l-eżempju ta' dan il-panel, dan huwa l-ewwel panel li jiena attendejt Malta li hemm numru ugwalli ta' nisa u rgiel. Meta n-nisa jsiru presidenti tal-każini u li jkun hemm l-istess numru ta' nisa presidenti u ta' rgiel presidenti ta' każini, jiena nibda nemmen fuq il-fatt li n-nisa għandhom rwol importanti u deċiżiv fil-każin, meta dak isir, nibda narah fuq livell tangibbli. Ukoll għaliex jiena nemmen illi n-nisa għandhom rwol importanti ħafna fit-teħid tad-deċiżjonijiet. Jiena nirrappreżenta 'l Malta mhux bħala mara imma l-fatt li jiena mara huwa evidentement fattur li ma nistax ninjorah u naħseb illi nirrappreżenta 'l Malta b'ħilti kollha kif jirrappreżentawha l-irġiel li jaħdmu fil-ministeru tiegħi. Dik hija l-ewwel punt.

It-tieni punt li ridt nagħmel huwa fuq il-livell tal-mužika. Huwa fatt illi l-ikbar kollezzjonijiet tal-mužika mhumiex qegħdin f'idejn il-gvern, imma hemm arkivju tal-Katidral li huwa immens, li huwa għani ħafna u li naħseb li hu importanti li jiġi miftuħ iktar u iktar lejn ir-riċerka mužikali u lejn il-produzzjoni mužikali. Però m'għandniex bżonn nitkellmu biss fuq livell t'arkivji, jiġifieri fuq livell ta' mužika li eżistiet fil-passat. Hawn ukoll ħafna kompożituri ġodda, mužičisti li qegħdin jikkomponu dejjem iktar, pereżempju fl-Università hemm kompożituri żgħar li ħargu mill-Università u li jixtiequ li jindaqqu l-biċċiet tagħhom. U naħseb li nistgħu noħolqu djalogu magħħom. U wkoll ma nistgħux ninsew il-mužika li tiġi komposta anke llum għall-marċiċi. Jiġifieri dak huwa element ieħor ta' kompożizzjoni li minħabba l-festa qiegħed joħrog. Huwa importanti li jkompli jiżviluppa.

Fuq livell ta' identità, naħseb importanti li ngħidu li effettivament l-identità huwa dak li inti, dak il-mod kif inti tara li inti, u kif inti tiproġetta dak li inti tara lill-oħrajn.

U għalhekk il-festa hija mod kif inti tiprogetta lilek innifsek bħala persuna u bħala belt u bħala komunità lill-oħra jn. U ma naħsibx li l-festa hija element religjuż. Il-festa hija ċelebrazzjoni tal-komunità, mhix festa religjuža biss, skużawni. Naħseb li kif ghedt qabel, l-element religjuż u l-element soċjali qishom imblokkati f'xulxin u fuq livell ta' bilanċ naħseb illi huwa element importanti li imbagħad niddefinixxu fejn naħsbu li qiegħed il-bilanċ, għax id-diskors ta' bilanċ huwa diskors importanti ħafna imma huwa wkoll, sa certu punt, marbut mad-diskors ta' kontroll. U hemmhekk fejn għandna bżonn naraw fejn huma l-limiti.

### Kummenti mill-panel ta' Jeremy Boissevain

The only comment I want to make is in fact the thing that struck me most when I first visited a *Festa*. Actually the first time I was in the church during the *Festa* and suddenly there was a burst of fireworks and the smell of gunpowder came into the church and you had the smell of incense and gunpowder together and that's, I think iconic, a question of *Festa*; it's both.

### Intervent minn Ray Saliba

Irrid inserraħ ras Dr Cremona li fil-fatt sa issa anke presidenti, f'każini tal-banda, nisa kien hemm, Haż-Żebbuġ wieħed minnhom, tajjeb? Biex ikollok soljiv jiġifieri.

**Dr Vicki Ann Cremona** – U jkollna president wieħed u b'wieħed niftaħru qisna għandna xi gzuz. Il-fatt huwa, illi l-kontroll l-iktar huwa fl-idejn l-irġiel, u hemm bżonn nirrikonnoxuha din il-ħaġa.

**Ray Saliba** Huwa fatt ovvju dan, jiġifieri huwa fatt storiku, però qiegħed f'kull qasam ieħor tas-socjetà, mhuwiex rifless biss fil-qasam tal-festa, imma jekk pereżempju nieħdu l-vot lin-nisa fl-elezzjonijiet ġenerali ma naħsibx li kien qabel l-irġiel, kien wara. Jiġifieri mhux qed ngħidlek li tajjeb, imma f'kull prassi tas-soċjetà ġara dan. Jiġifieri aħna qed nimxu ma dak li kien ovvju f'kollo. Jalla jkun hemm iktar parteċipazzjoni, però partiċepazzjoni fuq livelli oħra minn nisa fuq il-kumitati tal-festi, mhux tal-baned biss, hija diffiċli ħafna.

Issa, punt rigward il-mużika fl-arkivji, għax naħseb li qed jaċċenna għaliha s-Sur Farrugia. Huwa veru li parti mis-sorsi f'kollezjonijiet privati, hemm ħafna mill-materjal li jikkonċerna l-kompożituri Maltin, speċjalment ta' natura sagra, mhux biss għal-festi ta' barra, imma l-iktar għal-festi tal-Knisja, ta' ġewwa, fil-pusseß tal-Knisja. Hafna minnhom qedin fl-arkivju tagħna tal-Mużew tal-Katidral u hemm ħafna materjal ieħor li qiegħed f'arkivji parrokkjali. Issa jiena nammetti, vera, ħafna mill-istituzzjonijiet bandisitiċi Maltin, isibu xi problemi, biex jużaw dawn is-sorsi. Għalhekk għandu jkun hemm pressjoni akbar fuq min hu responsabbi, jiena ngħid mhux tal-Mużew tal-Katidral, tal-Knisja, biex dak li hu ġid komuni jkun gawdut minn kulħadd. Irrid ngħidilkom li min kien jagħti d-donazzjoniet privati tal-mużika lill-Knisja, ħafna drabi, għax kellu f'rasu li dawn ikunu iktar aċċessibbli.

Issa, punt ieħor minn dak li qal is-Sur Farrugia fl-introduzzjoni, li jiena għadni newden fiha alavolja intqalet fil-bidu, kienet li l-pika ħażina. Il-pika mhijiex ħażina. Il-

pika hija stimolu, stimolant, bħalma nieħdu ġertu xorb aħna, meta mmorru Paceville. Jigifieri, il-pika importanti. Mhux sa nidħol issa fil-fili, imma l-pika importanti. Fil-fatt, kien hemm min ikkumenta, anke mill-panel, li l-pika importanti u tagħmel il-ġid. Li wieħed irid jagħmel huwa, li l-pika ma jagħmilhiex xi ħaġa ta' dannu li ggib ħsara fuq il-kawża tagħna, ta' dak li qed niċċelebraw, tajjeb, però altrimenti l-pika tgħin.

Irrid ukoll nikkumenta fuq xi ħaġa li ntqalet li l-festi dejjem jikbru. Din hi ossessjoni, anke ta' min jagħmel analiżi storika u antropoloġika tas-suġġett, li għandu f'moħħu li l-festa dejjem qed tikber, in-nar qed jikber u l-aspetti l-oħra qed jikbru. Min jagħmel analiżi analitika tal-festa tajjeb, sew arkivistikament u permezz ta' *field-work*, jinduna li f'ħafna aspetti, il-festa moribonda, mhijiex tikber. Issa jiena l-festa nħobbha ħafna u nagħmel ir-riċerka fuq il-festi. Jigifieri mhux qed ngħid hekk b'gost, qed ngħid hekk b'risonabbilità. Biex nieħdu ħsiebhom ġertu aspetti li qed ikunu moribondi. Jekk għandhom imutu ġertu affarijet, għaliex id-destin tagħhom huwa hekk, allura nħalluhom imutu bħalma mietu affarijet oħra. Però jekk nistgħu nikkuraw fejn għandna nikkuraw, għandna nagħmlu dawn l-interventi llum qabel għada. Protagonista importanti biex dawn l-affarijet jiġu rremedjati hija l-Knisja, il-ġħaliex il-festa verament tibda mill-knisja u tispiċċa ġol-knisja, hawn min jgħid. Mhux biss, imma l-festa hija festa reliġjuża predominament, jiġifieri ma nistgħux ninegħaw dan. Jidispjaċik, pereżempju l-awtoritajiet ekleżjastiċi li għandhom rwol importanti ħafna fit-tfassil tal-programmi tal-festa fl-irħula tagħna, huma assenti hawnhekk. M'hawn ħadd. Fejnhom? Appuntu, hawn min qed jinstemma jgħid m'hawnx interess. Propjament hemm interassi differenti mhux m'hemmx interess. Hemm interess. Jiena lilek għandi interess li nwaqqfek u għandi interess li nġagħlek tkompli għaddej f'oġgett. Jigifieri anke li nwaqqfek huwa interess. Tajjeb? Jigifieri jiena jiddispajaċini meta nara li qed ikunu assenti apposta, mhux għax ma jinteressawx ruħhom imma għax iridu jgħidu xi ħaġa b'dik l-assenza tagħhom. Wieħed irid joqgħod attent minnhekk, għax il-festa veru li l-partiċipazzjoni tagħha tagħmila n-nies ingenerali, Però l-festa għandha rwol kbir fit-tfassil tagħha l-awtorità ekkleżjastika. U wieħed irid joqgħod attent u b'għajnejh miftuħ fuq hekk.

## Kummenti mill-panel minn Charles Farrugia

Nixtieq nagħmel kumment żgħir għax issemมiet kemm il-darba l-Kurja u l-Awtoritajiet Ekkleżjastiċi u tajjeb niċċaraw. L-ewwel nett għandna magħna l-Kappillan tal-Imqabba, Dun Nazzaren Caruana, u nirringrazjawh talli qed magħna, però ovvjament mhux qiegħed hawnhekk biex jitkellem għan-nom tal-Kurja. Mill-aspett tal-Kurja ta' min jiċċara li l-organizzaturi informawni li kienu mistednin, u kien hemm invit direttament lil Monsinjur Gouder u lil kull min irid jiġi. Voldieri min-naħha tal-organizzaturi ma ġie eskluż ħadd milli jkun prezenti. L-organizzaturi jiċċaraw ukoll li sa kemm bdiet din l-attività ħadd ma infurmahom dwar jekk l-awtoritajiet tal-kurja kellhomx ħsieb jattendu jew le.

## Intervent minn Mario Vassallo

Prosit lill-organizzaturi talli qarribtu lid-dinja akademika mal-parattikanti, mad-dilettanti u mal-imgħallmin tal-festa, biex inkun korrett. Jien ukoll ngħallem l-Università u tiskanta kemm hemm numru sostanzjali ta' teżijiet li jinkitbu dwar aspett jew ieħor tal-festa. Mhux biss teżijiet fil-fakultà jew fid-Dipartiment tal-Istorja, imma wkoll teżijiet fil-fakultà tal-*Management*, dwar kif jitmexxa kažin tal-banda, fejn l-analizi ssir fuq dawn l-*NGOs* u l-mod tat-thaddim tal-immaniġġjar tagħhom. Semmejtu illi l-festa mhix marida. Imma b'daqshekk ma jfissirx li l-festa ma jkoll ix-bażżeen bżonn tabib għall-*checkup*. Il-bniedem imur għand tabib mhux meta jkun marid biss, imma anke meta jkun b'saħħtu biex jippreserva is-sħuħija tieghu u wkoll biex itejjeb il-pożizzjoni tiegħi. U allura hemm ċertu elementi fil-festa li ma nafx għandhomx mill-qamħ jew inkella mis-sikrana. Pereżempju skont statistika tal-*NSO*, u jgħidu li l-istatistika tikxef l-għawwar, in-numru ta' soċi fil-baned żdied. In-numru ta' partitarji, wkoll kompla jiżdied. L-infieq fil-festi, stastikament, żdied ħafna. Id-dejn ta' certi *NGOs* żdied ukoll. Però hemm nuqqas jew inqas bandisti. Jigħifieri n-numru ta' bandisti, fil-kuntest ta' dan kollu, qiegħed jonqos. Aħbar tajba għal min idoqq il-kurunetta għax jista' jinkera b'iktar flus, però aħbar ħażina għall-baned li jridu jagħmlu tajjeb biex jikru iktar bandisti minn barra.

Il-festa tibda fil-knisja u tispiċċa fil-knisja. Jiena llum ngħid il-festa tibda bil-*warming-up barbecue*, xi kultant organizzat mill-istess arċipriet jew kappillan u tispiċċa bix-xalata. Jigħifieri, post il-knisja għal ħafna mis-settur li jħobbu l-festi donnu li qiegħed jonqos. Hadd ma semma elementi illi forsi jdarrsu lil dawk il-kelliema li tkellimtu. Veru intkom ġejjin mill-element tax-xjenza soċjali, allura r-riċerka tagħkom generalment tkun *value laden* u mhux *value free*, imma naħseb li ppruvajtu tintgħoġbu wisq mat-tip tan-nies illi hawn hawnhekk jew ħsibtu li se jkun hawn hawnhekk. Jien ukoll parti mill-festa, jiġifieri mill-Mosta, inħobb il-festa u nammirha u naħdem għaliha, imma hemm elementi illi forsi ma ħargux, bħal pereżempju l-organizzazzjoni ta' *discos* waqt ħinijiet partikolari biex itellfu mill-attendenza taż-żgħażaq għall-aktivitajiet tal-banda l-oħra. Seħibna t-tabib ta' Haż-Żebbug semmilna l-ikbar liżżeen huwa s-sema, però hawn kažini li investew fil-liżżeen kbir li jgeżwer il-każin tagħhom, biex taqa' purtier quddiem il-każin u ta' min hu barra barra u min hu gewwa ġewwa u dak li għaddejnejn opposti jibqgħu għaddejjin.

Ma semmejtx pereżempju l-bejgħ ta' xorbi, b'mod abbużiv lil persuni taħt l-letta b'mod sfaċċat kontra l-ligi. It-tipjip fil-każini li mhux biss fi żmien il-festa, imma din it-tip ta' ligi għada mhix daqshekk infurzata f'ħafna mill-każini li għalinjas li nidħol jien. L-aħħar ħaġa, donnu wkoll li ż-żgħażaq, dawk li jridu jaqbżu mal-marċ, għamilt id-differenza bejn dawk li jkun qabel il-banda ma' dawk li jkunu wara l-banda. Dawk li jkunu ta' qabel il-banda, generalment jippreferu, mhux il-marċi bħal ma jippreferu ta' wara l-banda, imma jippreferu dawk id-diski tal-ġħajjurin, ngħidilhom jien, dawk id-diski illi propju jagħmlu dik il-pika li semma l-kelliemi ta' qabli propju ħażina, għaliex tinbena fuq is-supremazija, mhux qed ngħid għaż-Żrieraq ta' Santa Katerina, imma s-supremazija li tinbena fuq għax inti ħażin u jiena tajjeb u allura m'aħniex imsieħba.

L-aħħar punt. L-operaturi tal-festi huma mseħbin, però b'daqshekk ma jfissirx li m'għandux ikun hemm ir-regolatur għax inkella tirrenja l-ligi tal-ġungla.

### **Intervent minn Louis Vassallo**

Kulma nixtieq ngħid huma żewġ affarijiet li jinrabtu mat-tradizzjonijiet, speċjalment tan-nar. Issemmi li n-nar jista' jkun messagier tal-festa. U hekk hu. Anzi hija tradizzjoni li għada b'saħħitha sal-lum, parti minn tradizzjoni anzi, għax in-naħha l-oħra li kienet tirrekjedi lill-poplu li kienet tiġi mgħallma mill-knisja, qed nirreferi għar-rigward is-sawm li kien isir fil-festi Maltin, dan ilu żmien li spiċċa, però mill-att pirotekniku, lejliet il-festa, sa fejn naf jien, in-nar qatt ma jinħaraq f'nofsinhar, imma f'nofsinhar neqsin kwart. Din hija tradizzjoni li ġejja minn dak iż-żmien tas-sawm li meta kien jispiċċa s-sawm kienu jinqdew bil-murtali ħalli l-poplu jkun jaf li spiċċa s-sawm u bdiet il-festa. Jigifieri, mill-att reliġjuż jew kult tal-poplu spiċċa, imma mill-att pirotekniku għadu hemm, però jrid jiġi mgħallem aktar ħalli l-ġenerazzjoni li tielgħa tgħożż aktar dawn l-affarijiet.

L-aħħar punt li nixtieq ngħid huwa rigward dawk in-nies li ssemmew ukoll, speċjalment tal-midja għax certi sezzjonijiet ta' gazzetti ta' kuljum, li bil-blog tagħhom kollettivament dejjem, muwiex ix-xewqa li jaraw it-tajjeb imma li jżeffnu l-ħażin u nasal biex ngħid li kważi kważi jifirħu meta ssir id-diżgrazzja. Dak x'inħoss jien u li sfaċċatament l-falzitā tagħhom tidher meta ġieli nħoloq il-festival tan-nar fil-Port il-Kbir, li dawn ma jqiesu xejn u bdew jgħidu prosit u kemm hu sabiħ il-logħob tan-nar bħallikieku qalu li dan il-logħob tan-nar muwiex maħdum mill-istess nies, mhux manifatturat mill-istess postijiet u semplicelement flok ġie maħruq fik-lokalitā tagħhom, ġie maħruq fil-Port il-Kbir. Jigifieri, dawn in-nies anqas biss jirrealizzaw li dawn huma maħdumin mill-istess nies li jagħtu kontribut ma' tul is-sena kollha.

Jiena qed ngħid dan biex wieħed jiftaħ moħħu u ma jiblax dak kollu li jaqra u ngħożżu l-kultura tagħna. Grazzi

### **Intervent minn Marthexe Tanti**

Biex inżomm il-bilanc ħa titkellem mara. Marthexe Tanti. Nista' ngħid li spettatur u kritiku tal-festi. Il-festi nħobbhom ħafna, miż-Żurrieq u għandna żewġ festi kbar u l-festi verament inħobbuhom. Però nixtieq nikkumenta fuq dak li jdejjaqni bħala spettatur u dak li jogħġġobni wkoll. Ma jogħġġobnix immens li l-paganiżmu li jkun hemm fil-festi, assolutament. Imma nħossni ma naċċettahx. Festa hija xi ħaġa sabiħa, anke kemm fil-festa ta' barra hemm il-kultura u għandna nżommuha. Għandna nżommu dak kollu li hu Malti. Idejjaqni ħafna anke l-aspett anke ta' monti, ġugarelli jinbiegħu fil-festi, m'għandhomx x'jaqsmu assolutament. Biex familja jew tnejn jaqalgħu l-qligh tagħhom mill-festa, għalija qiegħdin ukoll iħammgu ftit mill-kultura tal-festa.

Tkellimna wkoll fuq il-baned u xi ħaġa li kienet togħġġobni qabel u issa sparixxat hija li qabel kif jibda marċ, ningabru mal-marċ biex nimxu mal-banda u nisimgħu l-banda. Il-bandisti jagħmlu sena jiltaqgħu l-każin, jiriħersjaw, imbagħad in-nies tikkonċentra fuq ix-xorb. Il-bandisti jagħtu mill-ħin tagħhom is-sena kollha, timxi l-banda u nitla'

nara l-banda fil-pjazza biex nismagħha dak il-ħin biss, l-istess marċ xi erba' darbiet jew ħames darbiet ħiereġ minn widnejk.

Nixtieq l-ewwel nett ikun hawn iktar kumitati tal-festi, jikkonċentraw fuq dan l-aspett, li meta għandek banda miexja fit-toroq, u żejjint it-toroq għaliha u żżejjint it-toroq biex in-nies jgħaddu minn hemm, nikonċentraw naqra kif nistgħu nġibu n-nies mal-banda fit-toroq. Dik waħda minnhom. Haġa sabiħa mat-turisti hija li l-kunċert tal-banda fil-pjazza, niftakar ġieli l-pjazzez kienu jkunu vojta. Hijha ġurnata fejn in-nies ma jitelgħux il-pjazza għax jiddejqu f'dal-kunċert. Għall-maqlub tal-marċijiet fit-toroq, dawn il-kunċerti tant saru ta' livell sabiħ li l-pjazza tkun maħnuqa grazzi għal kull min hu involut kemm fil-programmi, kemm fl-organizzazzjoni biex dan sar progress fiha.

L-aspett tax-xorb huwa aspett li qed jirrifletti ħażin fuq il-festi. Qed jiġu nies fl-irħula, mhux mir-raħal biss, li jaraw fejn sa jkun hemm festa ħalli jiskru ġo dik il-festa. Dan naħseb ma jagħmilx unur kemm għall-organizzaturi u kemm għall-kultura Maltija. Jekk xi ħadd għandu jikteb, li ġie minn barra u kellu jikteb waqt festa x'ra b'għajnejh, dan sa jixgħel ħafna x-xorb sfrenat u l-imġieba waqt certi marċijiet. Verament nemmen li l-kumitati nfishom ma jixtiquhx dan għax dan mhux qiegħed isir min-nies li huma responsabbi li verament iħobbu l-festa.

Apparti minn hekk ukoll nixtieq nitkellem fuq l-aspett tal-mużika gewwa l-knisja li tiġi organizzata verament b'livell għoli, ikun hemm ħafna ċelebrazzjonijiet fil-knisja, imma għax ikunu daqshekk mogħmijin bil-festi ta' barra ma jħallux dik is-siegħa li forsi nisimgħu xi haġa sabiħa li qed issir fil-knisja nfisha u dan għall-qaddis jew għall-Madonna li qed niċċelebraw fir-raħal. Inheġġeg ħafna żgħażaq jien biex jinvolvu ruħhom fil-każin u anki ridt insemmi l-aspett tal-volontarjat li huwa qawwi. Xi rridu aħna li jiġi pereżempju bħal gvern meta tkun qed jorganizza ċelebrazzjoni, jikri lil tad-dawl, jikri lil min jarma, inħallsu l-flus biex jiġu jarmaw it-toroq? Għax jiena fil-futur dik li qed nara. Ikun hemm kumpaniji li jarmaw it-toroq huma, ikun hemm kumpaniji li jfornuk bid-drapp, li jfornuk b'dak is-servizz. Għad niġu fi żmien fejn ikollna nħallsu, għax in-nies li huma involuti fil-każini mhux qed imorru ħin f'għobb partajm, imma l-ħin tagħhom irid jiddedikah lill-każin bla flus, jitlef il-flus u daqshekk. Imma kif inhi l-ħajja, ma tistax tlaħhaq mal-ħajja, heq, ha jkollok tmur taħdem u mbagħad il-każini jiġu jqabbdu bħal ma qiegħdin jqabbdu certu bandisti jkollhom iħallsuhom, ikollhom iħallsu għan-nies biex jaġħtu sehemhom ġol-każin.

## Intervent mill-Onorevoli Dr Marlène Pullicino

Illum xtaqt nitkellem mhux bħala l-Onorevoli Pullicino, iżda bħala Marlène ta' Joey tal-Bliq, miż-Żurrieq. L-ewwel haġa ngħid prosit lil Marthexe għax qabel għidtilha qis li titkellem. U naħseb tajjeb nagħmlu aċċenn fuq x'inhu l-mutur tal-festa. Il-mutur tal-festa huwa l-emozzjonijiet kbar li nħossu. Jiena illum inħoss li intom għamiltu servizz kbir lill-kultura Maltija, għaliex lissintu dak li jiena nħoss, imma kull meta nipprova nesprimih, tant nemozzjona ruħi, li min ma jafnix jibda jaħseb li qed niġgieled. Fil-fatt mhux għax inkun qed niġgieled. Tant inkun irrid ngħidu kif inħossu, biex nipprova nwassal il-messaġġ tiegħi dak li nħoss jien naqsmu ma ġaddieħor, illi, kif għidtilkom, mhux kullhadd jinterpretani l-istess. U għalfejn għidtilkom bħala Marlène ta' Joey

tal-Bliq, miż-Żurrieq. Ha ntkom ftit l-eżempji żgħar tal-emozzjonijiet illum ta' ġħamsa u erbghin sena, politiku wkoll, għadni nħoss l-istess heġġa għall-festa li kont inħoss meta kont tifla. Kif serviet din l-emozzjoni matul dawn is-snini li għaddew? Jiena nġib quddiem ghajnejja kemm kont inkun kburija b'missieri x'hi nara 'l ommi tlestitu l-ispalletti u l-ingravata u l-beritta tal-festa fuq is-sodda, il-qmis mgħoddija stirata, biex ikun fil-banda f'pożizzjoni partikulari għax kien idoqq il-platti. Kemm kont nifraħ jien x'hi konna mmorru mal-banda, ommi żżommilna idejna, nisimgħu l-marċi, ħafna minnhom ta' surmastrijet ukoll tal-lokal. Hawn insellem lil Alfred Farrugia u lid-Didda u oħrajn kbar Żrieraq u anke mumhiex Żrieraq, illi kellu ġertu identità mal-banda, fil-każ tiegħi kien Tal-Karmnu taż-Żurrieq, illi xhi tisma' l-Queen Victoria Band iddoqq, qegħdin fejn qiegħdin, għandha sett ta' marċi li jidendififikawha u jidendififikawha wkoll ma' raħal twelidi. U l-istess għal ta' Santa Katerina u l-istess għal tal-Ġilju u l-istess għal ta' Lourdes illi ħafna drabi konna mmorru ndoqqu anke bnadi oħra, għax missieri kien jinkera wkoll biex jaqla' xi ħaġa tal-flus biex irabbina u biex jgħallimna l-iskola, l-istess ħaġa kont insewgi u kont ninota dak iż-żmien. Li kif qal sewwa s-surmast tagħna Alfred Farrugia, huwa fenomenu li sfortunatament qed jiġiċċa għaliex m'għadhiex tingħata importanza biżżejjed lill-identità partikolari, mhux Maltija biss issa. Jiena qed ngħid identità tar-raħal tagħna li hija importantissima. Jien l-iskola tal-Gvern kont, u konna nkantaw l-innu taż-Żurrieq, aħna, prattikament kuljum. Identità.

Haġa oħra li lili emozzjonatni ħafna dak iż-żmien u li għada sservini sal-lum, li niftakar, li tħegġiġni biex nibqa' nagħti kontribut, meta jien tant xtaqt nitgħallek il-mužika dak iż-żmien, imma ovvjament ma stajniex inħallsu aħna. Meta l-każin aċċettanti biex nitgħallek il-mužika, ma nistax nespremlkom x'ħassejt jien meta kelli l-opportunità li nitgħallek u tawni l-strument għall-ewwel darba. Il-ġenituri tiegħi, bħalma hawn ħafna ġenituri sal-lum stess li ma jaffordjawx li jixtru l-strument tal-banda lil uliedhom, ma kinux jistgħu jagħtun dik l-edukazzjoni mužikali kieku ma kienx għas-socjetà u l-każin tiegħi. Allura dik għalija hija emozzjoni illi ma' tul ħajti kollha lili kkvinċitni li għandi nibqa' nagħti lura lill-każini tagħna, u nibqa' nagħti lura biex tfal oħra, illum żgħażaq u kbar għax jiena qed nixjeħ ukoll, jieħdu dik l-esperjenza, jien semmejt l-esperjenza tal-mužika, però mhux biss, l-esperjenza fl-artiġġjanat, kif jitgħallmu dawn jinduraw pereżempju, kif jitgħallmu jagħmlu l-irħamar, bħala *carpenters*, bħala skultura, armar ta' pavaljuni, ħjata. Dawk kollha huma snajja' illi fil-każini tagħna qiegħdin jiġu u għandhom jibqgħu mgħallmin.

L-emozzjonijiet li nħossu aħna bħala parti mis-socjetà tagħna, ma nistax nifridhom qatt, bl-ebda mod, mill-emozzjoni li nħoss jien x'hi toħrog il-Madonna fuq iz-zuntier. Tgħiduli intom, qed tistenna l-Madonna toħrog fuq iz-zuntier biex ikollok emozzjoni? Xejn minn dan. Imma għalija, dik li qed nara l-komunità tiegħi kollha, u ngħid kollha għax jiġi mill-erba' rjieħat tad-dinja, shabi min hu professur l-Università, min fil-politika, min hu avukat, min dentist, min tiċer, niltaqgħu hemmhekk fuq dak iz-zuntier kull sena, biex incapċpu bil-ħerqa lill-Madonna nibku, kollha nibku, nifirħu bil-ferħ. Il-Madonna hemm, fil-każ tiegħi qed nitkellem fuq il-Madonna tal-Karmnu taż-Żurrieq, qed tgħaqqadna, qed tiġiborni biex dak l-element ta' religjon ma nista' nifirdu qatt jiena

mill-festa tieghi, u naqbel ma' Patri Adrijanu iva li-festa tibda fil-knisja u tispiċċa fil-knisja u li kull minn hu parti mill-festi, kemm jekk huwa kleru, kemm jekk inhu lajk, għandu postu li mhuwiex aktar jew anqas importanti mill-president tas-soċjetà, mill-bandist, minn dak li li jarma, minn dak li jżarma. Kulħadd għandu sehem x'jagħti. U jekk irridu nżommuhom ħajjin il-festi, kullħadd irid jagħti mingħajr ma joqogħod jaħseb x'sa jieħu lura. Għax ha tieħu lura bħal ma ħad ien u bħalma ħadu dawn in-nies kollha. Ha tieħu xorta lura. Mela jiena napprova mingħajr ħafna emozzjoni għax anke illum emozzjonajt ruħi, imma skużawni mhux għax irrid, inħegġeg lil kullħadd, għax anke il-kleru li kien mistieden u ma ġiex hawn, inħegġiġhom jifhmu xi nħobbu, x'inhuwa għażiż għalina ħalli d-devozzjoni, il-festa kulturali, il-festa soċjali, l-identità tar-raħal u l-identità Maltija nieħdu ħsiebha. Mhux biss nieħdu ħsiebha, imma nindukrawha għax jekk ma nindukrawhiex tisfaxxa maż-żmien u ma nistawx naħseb jiena naffordjaw li xi ħaġa sabiħa bħal din nitilfuha. Għaldaqstant nagħlaq billi nirringrazza lil-President u lill-Kumitat tal-Kažin tal-Ġilju u nħegġeg biex kažini oħra u soċjetajiet oħra jieħdu l-eżempju tagħhom li iva l-kultura u l-importanza tagħha fil-kultura tal-festi npoġġuha, iva fuq livell akademiku wkoll ħalli tingħata dik l-importanza illi forsi sezzjoni tal-poplu tagħna s'issa thoss li m'għandiex tagħtijha.

### **Kummenti tal-aħħar mill-panel: Dr Vicki Ann Cremona**

Naħseb li m'hemm l-ebda riċerka li hija *value-free*. Kull riċerka għandha evidentement *value-laden*. Hemm teknika fir-riċerka fejn inti tipprova, qiesek tistabbilixx distanza bejnek u bejn dak li qed tosserva. Imma 100% *value-free* ma teżistix. Però naħseb li naqbel ma' ħafna mill-kummenti li qal is-sinjur meta għamel l-intervent tiegħu. Fuq il-livell ta' identità kont qed nisma' b'attenzjoni kbira x'kontu qiegħdin tgħidu u anke l-kritika kienet interessanti. Huwa interessanti l-fatt meta nibdew nitkellmu b'mod fuq il-festa għaliex ngħixuha ma nistgħux ma nkun ux emozzjonali għaliex hija parti mill-ħajja tagħna u evidentement l-emozzjoni hija sabiħa ħafna li nitkellmu biha għaliex turi li pratikament il-festa hija parti minna, intrinsika, li hija parti mill-pori ta' ġisimna biex ngħidu hekk u naħseb li dak huwa l-iktar ħaġa li jżomm il-festa l-fuq bħalm'huwa l-volontarjat. Jiena naħseb li l-iktar fattur importanti li wieħed irid iqis fil-festa huwa l-volontorjat u kif il-volontarjat jispicċċa, l-identità tal-festa almenu tal-festa kif nafuha tispiċċa, pereżempju huwa interessanti l-fatt li għandna iktar nies fil-kažini imma għandna inqas nies li qiegħdin jitgħallmu strument, għax biex titgħalliem strument hija dixiplina kbira, u li għandna nqas bandisti, irridu mmorru nikruhom. Naħseb li dik hija fattur li forsi għandna naħsbu fih u li naraw kif nistgħu nindirizzawh. Però l-fatt li aħna nitkellmu b'emozzjoni fuq il-festa, hija evedentement il-fatt li aħna nidentifikaw magħha u naħseb li huwa element li juri s-saħħha tal-festa u s-saħħha tagħna fiha.

### **Kummenti mill-Panel: Christine M. Cassar**

Nixtieq nagħmel żewġ kummenti, l-ewwel wieħed fuq in-nisa. Meta bdejt nitkellem iktar kmieni fuq in-nisa, il-perċentwali li jidhru fl-istatistika jqarrqu bina, sempliċiment għax hemm inqas nisa bil-licenzja biex jagħmlu n-nar ma jfissirx li n-nisa mhux

involuti. Naħseb li aktar hi riflessjoni li hemm ġertu rwoli - għax jekk fil-kumitat mela dawk nies important u qishom in-nisa għax ikunu qed jagħmlu xogħol minn wara l-kwinti ma narawx qisu l-importanza tagħhom. Jista' jkun li iktar riflessjoni ta' liema rwol li naraw bħala importanti *rather* milli kemm huma involuti vera n-nisa għax ħafna ħafna nisa involuti. U l-aħħar kumment huwa, isemmew żewġ affarijet li nixtieq naqqadhom flimkien, il-kumment fuq in-nar bħala messaġġ u l-emozzjoni. Dak huwa l-messaġġ tal-festa u tan-nar. Hija l-emozzjoni tan-nies ta' warajha.

### **Kummenti mill-Panel: Jeremy Boishevain**

I am very happy to see that the spirit of the festa is very much alive in Malta. In judging from the verbal pyrotechniques here I think it's going to continue for the next fifty years at least. So keep it up. It's wonderful.

### **Kummenti mill-Panel: Charles Farrugia**

Grazzi ħafna. Nixtieq nirringazzja lill-kelliema għaliex wara dawn id-diskorsi kien hemm ħafna xogħol u kien hemm kuraġġ ukoll li tīgħi quddiem udjenza esperta, għax hawnhekk għandna l-krema tal-ispeċjalizzazzjoni fil-festi. Jiena mill-ewwel ġhidt li mhux sa nkopru l-aspetti kollha għax tant hemm aspetti u ħadt gost li ħareġ l-element tal-*NGOs*. Dis-sena hija s-sena tal-volontarjat u għandna niċċelebrav għax kultant il-kelma volontarjat hawn Malta marbuta ma' kollox barra l-każini. Qiesu għandek il-każini għax ilhom hemmhekk, kienu hemm u neħduhom *for granted* u nassocjaw biss il-ħidma għall-karită bħala volontarjat. Dan m'għandux ikun għax naħseb l-eqdem volontarjat kważi anke jekk naraw il-*muoto soccorso* li kien ježisti fi ħdan il-każini, huwa propju minn ġol-każini.

Nirringazzja l-kelliema u lill-organizzaturi, għax kien hawn tim ta' organizzaturi li kollha mis-Soċjetà tal-Ġilju bil-kameramen, bil-filmati, bil-*PowerPoints*, bil-qari tal-provi, bl-armar tas-sett u d-disinn u anke reklamar bħal *billboards* u naħseb kienet prova wkoll ta' kemm il-każini kapaċi jiġgeneraw energija għaliex biex torganizza seminar bħal dan, sal-inqas dettall jiġifieri kif qed taraw anke kien hawn ilbieraħ grupp shiħ sal-ġħaxra ta' bil-lejl sal-inqas dettall. Prosit u grazzi lilkom ukoll li għoġġobkom tīgu u t'għejnuna wkoll nifħmu għax fir-realtà ħafna minn dak li smajna fih x'tixtarr u fih naħseb anke għalina li ppreżentajna ħafna ħsieb warajh.

Biex nagħlqu, il-president tal-każin, is-Sur Teddy Farrugia ha jippreżenta issa dawn il-*mementos* li semmejna l-ewwel lill-ispeakers u kif għidna huma maħdumin mis-Sur Antoine Farrugia u ħa jkunu rikordju ta' dan il-każin li għadu bħalissa kantina biss però huwa propju biċċa ġebla minn dik il-kantina illi għandha tibqa' memorja ta' das-seminar u taċ-Ċentinarju wkoll.

Grazzi ħafna.