

Ethnicity and Representation within the Maltese Media Industries

Dr. Josephine Ann Cutajar

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*Ethnicity And Representation
Within The Maltese Media Industries
(2nd Part)
Josephine Ann Cutajar*

The following is an analysis of a sample of programs produced Mr Alvin Scicluna, a well-known television presenter. I undertook to look at four separate programs, namely programs 3 - 6 of the 1997-1998 broadcasting schedule. The choice of programs was random. Table 1 gives a list of the features analyzed.

Table 1: Features in Ghawdex Illum

Date	Title
19th/ 21st Oct.	Il-Missjoni u L-Kumisjoni Ghawdxija <i>The Mission and the Gozitan Commision</i> Tigrija Palazz <i>Tigrija Palazz- a mall</i> Ghawdex Jilbes Il-Libsa tal-Harifa <i>Gozo in Autumn</i>
26th/28th Oct.	Gozo - Island of Oblivion. Wirja u Publicakazzjoni ta` Richard England <i>Gozo - Island of Oblivion. Publication and Exhibition by Richard England</i> Il-Hames Missjoni Djocesana u Manifestazzjonijiet <i>The fifth Diocesan Mission and Religious Activities</i> L-Opra Lirika Madama Butterfly fit-Teatru ta` L-Opra Aurora <i>The Opera Madam Butterfly at the Aurora Opera House</i>
2nd/4th Nov.	L-Arti ta` George Vella f` Wirja Personali <i>Exhibition of the artistic work of George Vella</i> Tfajla miz- Zebbug tirbah il-kuntest ta` Miss Gozo <i>A teenager from Zebbug wins the Miss Gozo contest</i> Il- Loghob tan-Nar: Sabih u l-Ikrah

Fireworks: pros and cons

9th/11th Nov. It- Turizmu: Pilastru fl-Ekonomija Ghawdxija
Tourism: A tenet in the Gozitan Economy

All in all, ten current affairs features were shown in these four programs. The topics discussed were as follows:

Table 2: Main themes Discussed in Program

Topic	Features
Religion	Gozitan Missionaries and their work abroad Fifth Diocesan Mission in Gozo
Economy	Tigrija Palazz Commercial
Countryside	Gozo in Autumn The work of Richard England Preparations for Madam Butterfly
Current affairs	The winner of the Miss Gozo Contest
Current affairs	Fireworks

As can be seen from this sample, there were more features devoted to culture, what might be termed as 'high culture', than anything else. These occasions usually attract the attention of some middle class Gozitans, but more often than not are patronized by middle class Maltese and foreign nationals who visit or live on Gozo (interview with member of the Gozo Cultural Committee, 17th July, 1997). Religion is, according to the producer (interview with Scicluna on the 23rd of December, 1997), the goose which lays the golden egg when it comes to newsworthy items. The Roman Catholic Church, the main religion in Gozo, has its own leader, the Bishop Nikol Cauchi. Scicluna argues that the Church has turned Gozo into a 'microsmic state' (interview on 23rd December, 1997) since it has more political maneuverability than the Parliamentary Secretary for Gozo, the state representative, who has to toe both the party and political office line and therefore isn't allowed a lot of room. This means that in Gozo the Church rules supreme since Gozo's peripherality to the political center often results in the total neglect of the island, so much so that if it was not for the Church in Gozo which steps in where the state leaves off, certain services and institutions would not be made available to the citizens. The Church can be considered as the homogenizing element in Gozo, the institution which brings together a number of disparate social groups under its 'political' umbrella.

When it comes to current affairs, the events which take place on Gozo, either occur all in the same week, or nothing newsworthy happens for weeks on end. This might explain the reason as to why a

small number of current affairs features are to be found within this category. At the same time Jakubowicz et al. (1994: 42) argue that the content of texts are affected by the filmmaker's perceptions of audience expectations, desires and responses. Scicluna (interview on 23rd December, 1997) confesses that he has been accused of focusing too much on the events that take place in Victoria, the capital and only town on Gozo, the place which he considers to be the socio-political and cultural center of the island - see Table 2 for confirmation. Although he argues that each village in Gozo has its own identity, he does not deem all the events which happen within them to be newsworthy. His fear is that if he was to report all that takes place within these villages, Ghawdex Illum would be dubbed 'parochial', and the program would then lose its credence among its relatively larger Maltese audience.

The generic form also plays a role in structuring content and format. This is because news production reflects prevailing news values. The issue here is that news values often derive from the dominant social class - middle class, heterosexual, Maltese, Catholic males - and by adhering to these values, the producer/director is reinforcing the same stereotypical images he wanted to challenge in the first place. Scicluna (interview on 23rd December, 1997) feels that, "Trid tkun Ghawdxi biex tifhem lil Ghawdxi" (You have to be Gozitan to understand a Gozitan). At the same time, as Mercer (1994: 87) points out, the struggle to retell the stories of ethnic minority identity within a filmic language which positions that identity as a problem, is in itself problematic. This means that Scicluna as the person responsible for filming, script writing, editing, producing and directing Ghawdex Illum has to juggle with various issues, namely the aesthetic code of documentary making, the needs of the audience, the reaction of the community to the way they are represented and to the need to sell the text.

Another problem the producer/director had to come to terms with was the Gozitans' diffident character. At the beginning of the series Scicluna said that he had found it very difficult to find people from within the community who were willing to participate in the making of the program. The program "fetah bieb fuq Ghawdex" (opened a window on Gozo, Scicluna on the 23rd of December, 1997). Self-definition gave the Gozitans pride and self-respect and hence made them less reluctant in participating in this series. Scicluna said that the Gozitans' unwillingness to work with him stemmed from the fact that the latter were fed up with being turned into the butt of ridicule by Maltese filmmakers. Scicluna had to overcome this lack of trust in filmmakers, which he has done, because as he points out, now Gozitan individuals are chasing him with ideas about topics he should tackle and not the other way around as in the past.

Another reason as to why the Gozitans put their 'trust' in Scicluna as a reliable spokesperson, is an unspoken internal imperative among minority ethnic groups of refraining from discussing in public what really makes them different from the dominant ethnic group (Kray 1993: 352). In spite of the constant allusion in the program to the fact that Gozo as an island is the only region in Malta with its own distinct physical identity, Scicluna is very cautious about defining what makes Gozitans as people different from Maltese. For example, the number of items featured in the programs, mainly those on culture, are more likely to underline the fact that Gozitans, dubbed by the Maltese as 'backward natives', are as 'cultured' as the Maltese. Factors which identify the Gozitans as different, as for example dialect and accent, are suppressed. The Gozitans interviewed in the programs tended to adopt standard Maltese instead of speaking their own dialect: they tended to overdress for the interview or to be shown speaking in over decorated rooms, signs that they have made it economically. These are signs that the Gozitans want and try to be 'white' when speaking in public by annihilating those aspects which render them different from the dominant group and underlining what they have in common with the latter. As Kray (1993: 352) points out, the stigmatized group tries to keep a low profile by avoiding to draw attention to itself in terms of speech, dress and standard of

living. Kray (1994: 352) calls keeping a low profile, a survival strategy in an environment where difference is stigmatized.

Features

In this section, the different features will be analyzed separately. The following general themes seemed to interweave within the broader general topics (see Table 3).

Table 3: Themes relating to Gozo

Theme	Feature
The People	George Vella's Exhibiton Seminar on tourism Madama Butterfly Gozitan Women Gozitan Missionaries and their work abroad Miss Gozo Contest
The Cultural	Fireworks The Fifth Diocesan Mission
The Economy	Tigrija Palazz - commercial Seminar on Tourism
The Land	Gozo in Autumn Work of Richard England Seminar on Tourism

Gozo and its People

Gozitan women

From the textual analysis undertaken, the most glaring aspect that hit me as a woman, was the invisibility of women within these features. This invisibility was even evident in the pronouns and nouns used within the program, which in the Maltese language are all gendered. Allusions to tourist (tourist), cittadin (citizen), Ghawdxi (Gozitan), were all addressed in the masculine form when a plural, more inclusive form could have been used.

From the ten features viewed, only two dealt with female protagonists, and even the way these women were represented, helped to differentiate them from the male interviewees. The invisibility of women was glaring since all the anchorpersons or persons interviewed tended to be middle class Gozitan/Maltese males. The two features where women were shown expressing their opinions, were those on Gozitan Missionaries and their work abroad and the other one concerned with the Miss Gozo Contest. As Heung (1995: 84) points out, ethnic minority women when not invisible, as in the case of the other eight features, tend to be used as decorative backdrops, or represented as one

dimensional, as the image of altruistic care givers evident in the feature on missionaries.

The female protagonists within these two features were five in all - one Gozitan and two Pakistani nuns together with a Gozitan female lay missionary in the feature on Gozitan missionaries, and a mother and a daughter in the feature on the Miss Gozo contest. Issues of status, age, physical looks and nationality influenced the way the female subjects were portrayed within these features.

When it came to Sister Rakele Agius, a middle aged Gozitan Dominican sister working in Pakistan as a teacher, missionary and a nurse, the focus was on her 'laudatory' work among the poor in Pakistan. The nun was shown standing facing the camera in a neutral space recounting her work in Pakistan. The verbal narrative in this feature was accompanied by a number of stills which helped to give visual confirmation of what was being said by the nun. The main objective of the whole feature was to persuade the audience to part with its money since it would be money well spent.

The two younger Pakistani nuns who were interviewed, served to underline the important work the Maltese Dominican sisters are doing in Pakistan, and how grateful the receivers of these beneficencies are: "Our people are very grateful, even the Moslems". The juxtaposition of these younger Pakistani nuns also helped to define the 'us', in this case the civilized, better off Gozitans, against the "Other", the poor, backward Pakistanis. By presenting Pakistani and Gozitan nuns in the same feature, the producer helped to define the Gozitans as 'civilized' Christians, members of a progressive race who can afford to be kind to people who are less better off than themselves, 'people who have relatively nothing'. Through this juxtaposition, the Gozitan missionaries help to define themselves as 'white', and the Pakistanis as 'black' and hence inferior. Hueng (1995: 94) regards skin color as a mobile signifier which can be played upon in different contexts. In this context it helps to empower the Gozitan ethnic group and consequently disempower the Pakistani ethnic one. As Heung (1995: 83) points out, the power of the colonizer, in this case the missionary and the producer-director, lies in the power to speak for and represent the "Other". As Crosby (1991: 271) points out every culture uses other 'peoples' to measure itself against so as to define who it is and who it is not.

The way the camera was used in these features was quite interesting. The camera usually gave a middle up shot of the persons in question, keeping its distance from those female bodies which were not deemed physically attractive by a heterosexually oriented producer/director, either because of their age, physical attributes and/or their social status. This was evident in the close up of the younger relatively more attractive nun.

The same 'distancing' approach was used with the middle aged, Gozitan, female, lay missionary. Again, she was seen standing addressing the camera in a neutral place with her verbal spiel interspersed with visual stills. The fourth missionary, a Gozitan male, was given a different treatment. He was shown seated behind a desk in a study room. The space where he was represented helped to further endow him with power and authority, a power and authority bestowed on him by the Gozitan society as a living representative of 'God'. This visual treatment was not accorded to the nuns in spite of the work they do.

Both of these missionaries alluded to internationally renowned people they met on their visits/work abroad. Martina Micallef spoke about Mother Theresa, who for her symbolizes the perfect female role model of our time. The priest, Dun Guzepp Attard, who is the archpriest of a parish in Rome, in his monologue constantly referred to the Pope, describing the latter both as a superior and as a colleague. According to him, they work together to spread the word of Christ to the people in the Roman diocese. This name dropping serves two purposes - it helps to show that the Gozitans have

traveled abroad and therefore widened their horizons. In the case of the priest, it adds to the authority he derives from his role as a priest. At the same time, this name dropping alludes to the fact that Gozitans still suffer from an acute inferiority complex since they try to derive self-respect not from the successes they attain in their career, but legitimate their own endeavors through their relationship with important people who are not Gozitan. As Scicluna points out in the interview (23rd December, 1997), the Gozitans have a colonial mentality. Anything done by a 'foreigner', depending on the nationality of the foreigner that is, is given more credence than if it is done by a person from the community.

The second feature in which a woman was the protagonist, was the item concerning Miss Gozo. This was one of the shortest features ever tackled in the sample. Whether the length of the feature was due to the fact that Miss Gozo did not derive from Victoria and/or was not competent enough to express herself verbally, a sense of diffidence which Gozitans consider an asset in women, was not brought up in the interview. The usual aesthetic principles were used in order to turn the female subject into an object - shots of her on the cat walk looking bashfully at the camera, etc. In this feature, the anchorman did his best to intimidate Miss Gozo, alias Olivia Saliba, into silence. His contributions were longer than hers, when she had difficulty in expressing herself, he butted in and put words into her mouth. At the same time, he was continually referring to her by her first name, a form of address he did not adopt with the other personages he interviewed. He did the same thing when addressing Miss Gozo's parents. Although the couple appeared together, the interviewer made it a point to address the husband when it was obvious that the father had no inkling as to how his daughter got involved in the Miss Gozo competition. When the wife took it open herself to answer the questions addressed at her husband, the anchor person found a way of cutting her short, symbolically annihilating her. His attitude seems to say that men should be the self proclaimed representatives of the community

The People

The features which in this sample attempted to explain who the Gozitans are, are of two kinds: the ones where the Gozitans themselves attempt to claim and develop a consciousness and identity, and those where the identity is foisted upon them by people who do not derive from the community. Jakubowicz et al. (1994: 33) argue that imagining of the self and the community is both subjective and private, communal and public. These images helped in the articulation of minority communalism as well as prove to be a site of minority resistance of dominant discourse.

A phenomenon which continually came up when the Gozitans themselves tried to define who they were, was the constant comparison with important figures who derived from First World industrialized countries. In the feature on the paintings and sculpture of the Gozitan artist George Vella, the anchorman began by describing the artist as self taught, going on to add that the exhibition under discussion was a synthesis of Vella's experiments in the utilization of globigerina limestone as a medium on which to paint and sculpt. Later on in the feature, the anchorman goes on to say that Vella seems to be imitating the work of Blanquette, Franco Svizzeru and Alberto Giachomotti. By referring to these internationally renown artist, the anchorman might have wanted to allude to the fact that the work of the Gozitan artist is of the same calibre. At the same time, the constant use of the word 'imitating' deprives the artist of any agency. This issue cropped up again when the anchorman in question equated Vella with a craftsman. This, when added to the fact that Vella was the only personality who was not interviewed about his work, makes one wonder whether this was a case of the members of a community policing each other's visibility (Kray 1993: 352).

The feature on Madama Butterfly, on the other hand, showed the people involved in the production of the opera. The three persons interviewed, namely the production manager, the music director and the president of the Leone Philharmonic Society always ended on the same note, the fact that the opera was going to be a success because of the participation of world known opera singers such as Decorato, Burlo, etc., in leading roles, this when Gozitan singers were only offered secondary ones. This need to put Gozo on the map by constant reference and comparison with foreign institutions and individuals, derives from an acute inferiority complex as pointed out above. It might also derive from the assimilationist need to gain acceptance and approval from the dominant ethnic group.

It would interesting to compare this self-definition with the way the dominant ethnic group perceive the subordinate one. These two perceptions were encapsulated within the feature on the Seminar on Tourism. The way the dominant group defined the Gozitans was not to be found in the interviews with Maltese dignitaries but was referred to in the text of the anchorperson. The anchor person referred to the negative characteristics usually leveled at Gozitans by the Maltese namely that they tend to be parochial in outlook, conservative, materialistically minded and not so environmentally conscious. These qualities were then contrasted with the way Gozitans tend to regard themselves, namely as hard working as well as innovative when it comes to find ways to survive economical hardships.

The Maltese individuals interviewed in this feature, however, rarely referred to the Gozitan community. They were concerned mainly with the island as a tourist destination and the Gozitans came into the picture just because they happened to form part of the package being sold to the tourists. The Maltese representatives referred to the island as a jewel, the loved 'male' child they had to protect from the rapacious greed of the inhabitants, in this case the Gozitans. The Maltese speakers tended to idolize Gozo as an untainted cultural land, a zone of purity. Shields (1991: 187) argues that when a region is used as a screen upon which the dominant ethnic group projects its own personalized visions of an idealized human environment, they tend to deterritorialize and unpopulate the realm. The Maltese speakers focused on the idyllic pastoral landscape because in this way they could refrain from noticing the impoverished and demoralized population who have been put in this predicament because of the systematic exploitation coupled with the under-development of the land in question.

The Culture

As the various features on the role of the Catholic Church in Ghawdex Illum demonstrate, the bulk of the population on this island are still religious. The Church dominates their life, both politically and socially. It even figures in their art, as the two features on the Maltese and Gozitan artists demonstrate. Some of the Gozitan pastimes, namely fireworks, derive from the Church's prevalent presence on this island.

In the feature on the Fifth Diocesan Mission, the anchorperson began the prelude by saying that the "manifestazzjonijiet religjuzi ghadhom ghal qalb il-poplu taghna" (religious manifestations are still important to our people), in spite of the changing socio-economic context. The Church is the element which binds the community together. The Bishop in this feature was constantly alluding to the community by comparing it to the body of Christ and the sacred family (manifestation of a heterosexist discourse), both being wholes made up of parts. The Bishop however acknowledged the fact that this body was fragmented and that it was only through evangelization that its disparate parts could be brought together.

The feature on Fireworks is indirectly linked with the religious theme. Each village and town in Gozo has a titular saint, and every week in summer, from May up to September, a feast is celebrated in one parish or the other. The people demonstrate their affection to their patron saint, not only by taking part in religious activities, but also through spectacular displays of fireworks. These displays are followed avidly by a huge number of 'dilettanti' (what the Spanish call *aficionados*). There are two kinds of dilettanti - those who enjoy themselves manufacturing the fireworks, and those who enjoy watching the displays. The former are in constant danger in spite of the number of laws passed to ensure that fireworks are manufactured in safe environments. Every year, fireworks factories blow up resulting in a number of casualties. Such an incidence occurred in October 1997 when two Gozitan men lost their life. Such incidents always raise the issue as to whether the authorities should allow the display of fireworks during feasts.

The presenter in this feature seemed to be of the opinion that fireworks should not be abolished in spite of the danger they represented. He expressed the opinion that since fireworks manufacturing is a folkloristic and traditional craft which forms an integral part of the Gozitan identity, this craft should be retained though regulated. The main reason given as to why such a dangerous hobby should be retained is the fact that the Gozitan fireworks display by far surpass foreign ones!

The Economy

The relevance of this topic for the producer/director is evident in the time devoted to this theme, with a whole program being devoted to the feature on the Seminar on Tourism added to the lengthy commercial on Tigrija Palazz.

As the feature on the Seminar of Tourism underlines, the economy of Gozo depends on the decisions taken by the government and the way the private sector takes up these decisions. Since the seat of government is to be found in Malta and the main business offices are also to be found there, the economy of Gozo often depends on the decisions of people who are one step removed from the context as the anchor person points out at the beginning of the program.

This seminar brought together a number of individuals and institutions interested in promoting Gozo as a tourist destination. The anchorperson reported the Prime Minister as saying that tourism was the only viable option when it came to increasing employment opportunities and ameliorating the standard of living on Gozo. Shields (1991: 190) argues that regions become earmarked by the dominant ethnic group as tourist attractions for a couple of reasons. This ensues from the fact that the dominant group lives in an intensely urbanized space, their leisure time has been vastly expanded coupled with the unequal diffusion of economic wealth. Tourism was considered in this seminar as a viable option for the 'development' of Gozo because the Maltese would benefit from the development of Gozo as a recreational area on two counts. They would have the recreational space, which according to Richard England, is needed to help the Maltese "forget that hectic modern life which we unfortunately have to face today, so that we can recuperate our physical and mental strength to return back to the fray invigorated" (Program 4). Through the technique of self-definition by negation, there is no hectic life on Gozo, therefore progress is minimal. By promoting such a project, the government is also underlining the fact that it is not ready to invest heavily in the development of Gozo. The project of sustainable tourism would entail small-scale economic input while other mega-projects, such as the amelioration of the industrial sector on Gozo for example, would entail massive financial input in order to help overcome transportation and labor costs. This option was not discussed.

As the anchor person points out in the same feature, Gozo tends to be neglected until it is seen to be of benefit to the dominant ethnic group. This idea is alluded to when the anchorperson underlines the fact that the decision taken by the government to develop Gozo as a separate tourist destination would lead to the amelioration of various services related directly or indirectly with the tourist industry namely agriculture, the labor market, transport and communication, the construction sector, banking and retail services, the spread of cultural events into the village, the increase in the number of sports and sports facilities offered, as well as the amelioration of the infrastructure. The message seems to be here that services, goods and facilities are introduced on the market or their standard ameliorated not because of the needs deriving from the community, but as a means of attracting the tourist. This means that the landscape rather than the individuals that inhabit it are considered as important.

Gozitans are conscious of their peripheral location within the national and global economic market. This is made manifest in the commercial regarding Tigrja Palazz, one of the various shopping malls on the island. The constant shots of the Gozitan landscape might emanate from the fact that Scicluna got his film making skills by experimenting with visual images deriving from the Gozitan landscape (interview on 23rd December, 1997). In the same interview he expresses his gratitude to this land. "Being a Gozitan helped me to become a filmmaker. It instilled in me a competitive spirit, a will to fight. All things being equal, being a Gozitan is a handicap. But at the same time, it provided me with the impetus and ambition to make it". He considers being a Gozitan a handicap because as he alludes to in the interview which took place on the 23rd December, 1997, there is intense competition between the Maltese and the Gozitans. His argument is, that once the Maltese considers the Gozitan as his/her inferior, there are no hitches to the relationship between the two ethnic groups, but once the Gozitan becomes an equal, the Maltese see him/her as a threat.

The lyrical shots of the Gozitan countryside are a tribute to the land which has inspired and motivated the filmmaker and is still doing so after 500 programs, according to Scicluna. The underlying reason why Scicluna seems to focus more on the land than on the Gozitan people, might derive from the fact that jealousy is quite rampant within a small community. This distrust might stem from the Gozitan tendency to put those individuals which the community thinks have become too visible for their own good, in their place. Scicluna believes that the worst enemy of the Gozitan is another Gozitan (interview 23rd December, 1997). Scicluna seems to feel a sense of detachment from the two social groups.

The fact that Scicluna seems to devote more attention to the land than the people, and the fact that the Maltese are more likely to be portrayed voicing their opinions about Gozo than the Gozitans themselves, means that to a certain extent Scicluna seems to be reinforcing the images and voices which prevail in mainstream texts. The fact that Scicluna might in a way be echoing mainstream ideas about Gozo derives from his belief that Gozo has an identity of its own (interview on 23rd December, 1997), an idea which is echoed by Richard England in the features concerning the Seminar on Tourism and the one dealing with his work. Richard England, a Maltese architect and artist, "who has made a name for himself not only in Malta but also abroad", argues that the landscape gives Gozo its identity. "The rural areas, ..., the bastions, the Neolithic temples, the churches which soar over the humble village hovels huddling against each other like chickens beneath a brooding hen", these are the aspects which give Gozo its identity.

The sketches which Richard England includes in his book "Gozo, Island of Oblivion" have the objective of documenting 'the spirit of the place' on paper, in the hope that these places will be earmarked for protection from the ravages of progress. This quest for 'the spirit of the place' is an

attempt to salvage and consequently save an identity which according to England Malta lost thirty years ago. Crosby (1991: 274) argues that when the dominant group assumes the right to choose what fragments of a culture to salvage, these become the owners and interpreters of the artifacts salvaged. This occurs when these relics are proclaimed as 'public property' necessary when it comes to construct a 'national' identity threatened by progress and globalization. In this and the feature on tourism, the dominant group assumes responsibility for saving a dying culture. But as Crosby (1991: 285) asks, for whom is this heritage saved and to what end?

This question is asked by the anchorperson in the feature on the Seminar on Tourism. The argument in this feature is that if Gozo is turned into a 'presejju' (still life effigy), it is to the detriment of the inhabitants of the island. "Gozo is not a crib. There are villages and communities whose people want to enjoy the right to work and have fun as others do. So, who is to come first, the Gozitan (male!) or the tourist (male!)" The feature in question, while welcoming the idea of introducing sustainable tourism in Gozo, indirectly criticizes those speakers who focused on the need to help Gozo retain its identity but did not promote any solutions on how to help ameliorate the standard of living for the inhabitants of the island. As Shields (1991: 171) points out, intellectuals deriving from the dominant group, are implicated in the elaboration of a romantic image of the North without taking into consideration the socio-political implications and economic impact such an image might have for the locals. Scicluna knows the implications and voices them within the text. He agrees that Gozo should be helped retain its 'idyllic' landscape, and this he suggests should be done through some form of sustainable development which help preserve the landscape in question while providing its inhabitants with some means of earning a living.

Scicluna seems to take every opportunity to dwell on the Gozitan landscape. The tender caresses of the camera on the landscape are even evident in the feature on the explosion of the fireworks factory in Munxar. In the feature on Gozo in autumn he finds another opportunity to wax lyrical. The verbal text here complements the visual text. The text is continually dwelling on the effect 'progress' has had on the landscape of Gozo - "The march of progress might be detrimental to our island. But Gozo is still beautiful, it still has a countryside, is still natural". A threat to this idyllic scene, is, as the male voice over tones, humanity. Scicluna, while promoting these space myths, is conscious that these images might mask and promote regional exploitation which can result in relative poverty and cultural hegemony. He tries to counter cultural hegemony through the constant allusion to 'high' cultural events taking place on Gozo. When it came to dealing with the issue of unequal access to resources, the audience's attention was however distracted by the images of the Gozitan landscape which accompanied the verbal text. More space could have been devoted to the discussion of the socio-political impact of uneven development on the Gozitans, which after all is the aspect which renders them different from the dominant ethnic group. The section below will attempt to find reasons as to why this theme was not raised so often in this sample of Scicluna's work.

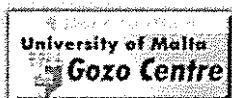
The audience

Mercer comes up with another issue which should be incorporated in this section. He remarks that textual material with marginal subject matter is often successful in the marketplace (1994: 71). Texts originating from ethnic intellectuals seem to appeal more to the dominant ethnic group than to the community from which the intellectual derives. Mercer (1994: 71) calls this the "crossover phenomenon". Scicluna is aware of this (23rd September, 1997) saying that his work is better received in Malta than in Gozo. Mercer (1994: 241) adds that the ethnic minority artists have to decide which audience they have to address. Their choice will in the end influence the distribution and circulation of audio visual texts as well as artistic or cultural validation of the text in question

(Mercer 1994: 71). Since the dominant ethnic group are more significant in the drive of 'black' art, ethnic minority artists tend to privilege white or middle class ethnic minority audiences (Mercer 1994: 242). In so doing, they fail to address the popular ethnic minority audience, who, as in this case, feel that the text does not always address them. By paying homage to the interests and aesthetic values of the dominant ethnic group, ethnic intellectuals in mainstream institutions tend to reinforce some of the stereotypes of their own people. This is evident in the silencing of the Gozitan voice and accent, and the constant referral to the Gozitans as rural. Gozo and its people still retain this aspect of their identity, but it is just one aspect.

[References available on request]

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