I am pleased that I could do my language proud: Mauzo

The Navhind Times

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VIVA GOA celebrates its 5th anniversary

BUZZ

Local Flavour Triumphs

By JOYNETA SOUJAN

“When you want something the whole universe will conspire together to help you get it”, said Paulo Coelho.

Damodar Mauzo joins the league of great writers like Rabindranath Tagore (who was unknown outside his home till it was translated), Anantamuthy, Orson Welles, Hanci Munduruk, in making local flavour a universal song of humanism. His book of short stories, Teresa’s Man and Other Stories from Goa, has been long listed for the prestigious international Frank O’Connor’s Short Story Award. ‘Translation’ (a target of dialectics at literary forums) has yet again served the purpose of taking regional writings (Konkani in this case) to a worldwide readership on a global platform.

Goa’s most loved man of letters, true to his reputation, has brought together a gamut of Konkani and English writers and readers under one platform - a feat in itself. Great credit goes to Xavier Cota the translator, instrumental in this phenomenal story of triumph. Teresa’s Man and Other Stories from Goa is a potpourri of realism, poetic myth, sodden, perception and pacy. Bhai’s art is kim but uninvestment, moulding but ununclical, profoundly Goan but distinctively individual. An innate sense of irony coupled with a complete absence of pomposity and pretense is what makes Bhai a wonderful writer. He creates thoughtfully clinical fiction on nerve constricting incidents revolving in the Goan experience; but a universal human dimension makes it encompass the entire human condition (reminiscent of Malgaj Days by R.K. Narayan).

A dichotomy of human emotion underlines the pieces Happy Birthday and Conventee’s Cat. The former is an irrevocable portrayal of a range of emotions between parents and children. The false of pure unconditional love is heartrended with shame, lack self consciousness and defeat. A dark and cruel element of human shallowness in relationships.

Bhai understands that the highest satisfaction may come from the reader’s growing realization and understanding of the characters and their problems. The presentation of human beings or of human situations and the revelation of both inherent in that human situation leads to a gradual and slow illumination of facts which is more satisfying than a manipulated perfectly worked out plot. His stories in the book like The Cyclone, Bhai’s Dead, From the Mouth of Babes and Sand Castles largely embody this aesthetics.

So important is a character to fiction that one man approaches the story by asking “Who’s story is this?” Bhai’s domain of fiction is the world of credible human beings, amusingly skewed and varied. Bhai essentially tends to reveal his characters indiectly through thought, dialogues and action folded into the drama itself. He very coquettishly makes his characters speak in character. Bhai’s livelihood in his writings is credibility and original. He uses symbols and imagery to add authentic verisimilitude to situations.

“It is a moonlight night, the moon, like a考核 fee, is literally burning her body. Below, the baked earth and above, the unceasing roar of fire. The whole earth is engulfed in heat like a pie being baked in the oven.”

“The idol, the Chovoth, the sacrifice is not a transcription of life but a dramatisation of it. In the familiar and the real, a skilful writer weaves vibrant and dramatic threads to transform the banal, clichéd and formulaic reality into a potent story. Teresa’s Man then becomes a meaningful read, a truism through the unknown, yet known realms of human lives.”

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One day this henpecked husband suddenly became furious for some minor reason. I felt this was a working man’s manically struggling to try to prove a point. That is all I required to hook me to this story. The ambience of a village like Majorda has been depicted in the story. The characters are real life ones whom we meet every day. I have only tried to weave the complex man-woman relationship that works at various levels.

Teresa’s Man had the fortune of appearing in three different translations - the first one by Augusto Pinto, the next by Sachin Pai Raikar and the recent by Xavier Cota. The story was taught at the college level.

Several real-life heroes have gained from lending their stories to the big screen, but the royalty payment has not necessarily been commensurate with their contributions.