

PUBLICATIONS in Maltese that manage to capture a truly diversified distribution of Maltese are a rarity. Reaching as wide a range of the public as possible can be done if authors define their style in terms that can appear to the young reader of Maltese at the same time be able to contain a trend of thought and structure of ideas that is eloquent and entertaining to the adult reader.

Contemporary writers have developed such styles in various languages notably in Italian with authors like Italo Calvino who through interest in the fairy tale or fable have developed a style of writing that sheds all the trappings of an elaborate and sometimes indulgent mode of writing which manages to be simple and profound at one time.

That is what contemporary Maltese literature could adopt giving it new and popular directions which would make it possible for literature to be accessible to all the people irrespective of their abilities in scanning the connotations of the language used by the author, since this style manages to convey even profound concepts with conciseness.

Such a book is Alfred Buttigieg's publication which at face value is an entertaining and well-plotted tale of a spider who goes through a number of experiences which lead him to a fatal end, which should be very accessible to school children between ages 10 and 13. Yet intertwined in the plot of the bold insect's peripatations lies serious and responsible observations on the role of man in society and the evaluation that man should develop towards nature and the world.

The use of such a style is as old as literature itself and can be tracked back to classical times with plays like **Frogs** by Aristophanes, as well as the early nineteenth century Italian poet and writer Giacomo Leopardi's **Batrocomiomachia** and our own times with works like George Orwell's **Animal Farm** and others.

The use of members of the animal world as images of man is common also in other forms of culture and can be found even in rock music with albums like **Animals** by Pink Floyd and many others. Alfred Buttigieg's novelty is found in his attempt to give his image the stands of an analytical being not simply a reflection of human states of minds that seem to be the general characteristic of other works of the same genre.

Alfred Buttigieg is perhaps better known with the Maltese public as a playwright and director than as a writer of novels. Original plays by Buttigieg were performed last year with success. These included **Bus Stop**, **Lqugh ghad-Dawl** and **La Logique** where the experimental and analytical were also present, as they are, though to a lesser extent in **Gezzu**. As in Buttigieg's theatre the theme of life in struggle with death and the inbetween human commitment with society may be seen as one of the central themes of his book which has been subtitled by the author himself as a tale for adults and children.

The drawing accompanying the text are Michael Fenech's sometimes very striking but in others rather vague, although the presence of visual material is of great aid especially to the young reader. Alfred Buttigieg is a young and talented writer in Maltese who could be a future established author of a younger generation than the contemporary Anton Grasso, Alfred Sant and Raymond Mahoney who in different ways are perhaps Malta's new hopes for the future directions of Maltese literature.

***Gezzu* by Adrian Stivala, Weekend Chronicle, 5/3/1982**