

Chapter II

MANOHAR MALGONKAR'S HISTORICAL NOVELS

2.1 MANOHAR MALGONKAR :

Manohar Malgonkar is a famous Indo-Anglian novelist, short story writer, historian, hunter and planter. He wrote also a play , a few literary and non-literary articles and film scripts . His work is not large in number but what it lacks in quantity is compensated by its quality.

The private life of a man is generally known to others through his biography, autobiography, diaries, memoirs, private correspondence and information received from him, his relatives, friends and associates. But this is not true in Malgoankar's case. He has not written his autobiography. He has maintained neither any diary nor any private correspondence. Quite a few books appeared on Malgonkar in recent years. In these books we get some details about Malgonkar's life and works. There are two books on Malgonkar's works : One by Dr. G.S. Amur's book and the other by James Y. Dayanand. The first book gives a general introduction to Malgonkar and his works upto 1971 and the other gives information about the interviews Prof. Dayanand had with Malgonkar during his visit to the U.S.A. in 1972. These two books provide the very useful and brief outline

of Malgonkar's life.

There are three phases of Malgonkar's life : the 1st phase from his birth in 1913 to 1937, the 2nd phase from 1937 to 1953 and the 3rd phase from 1953 onwards. The first phase deals with his childhood, experiences and influences on him, his interest in hunting and his princely contacts and their influences on him. The second phase deals with his army life, life in cantonment, the experience of war and his stay in Delhi. The third phase describes his post army career and his blossoming into a writer.

Manohar Malgonkar was born in an orthodox Brahmin family on 12th July 1913 at Jagalbet (Taluka : Joyda, District : Karwar) in Karnataka. His grandfather has left their native place Malgon near Vengurla, a hundred years ago and had come to Jagalbet and settled there. His grandfather brought with him the heritage of Konkan, he worked hard and became a successful agriculturist. Agriculture, working on mines and hunting were the family professions of Malgonkar.

Manohar Malgonkar remembers his childhood days, which were full of fun and frolicking, affections and petty

punishments. He could handle a rifle like a seasoned hunter at the age of ten. He helped his father in guiding the amateur hunters who came to Karwar jungles for hunting. There is a lot of similarity between the Konshet life of Gian Talwar, the protagonist in the novel A Bend in the Ganges and Manohar Malgonkar's life in Jagalbet and Karwar jungles.

Manohar Malgonkar completed his B.A. in English and Sanskrit from the Deccan College, Pune in 1935. He got interested in English Literature during his school and college life. He was fascinated by the works of Shakespeare, the Romantic poets, Charles Dickens, Joseph Conrad, Galsworthy, G.B. Shaw and the writers who wrote about India and the East. He was very much influenced by these writers. When Mahatma Gandhi entered on the political scene, there was a radical change in Indian Politics. The Gandhian Movement Spread all over India and everybody was drawn towards it inexorably, Malgonkar was not an exception to it. He was swayed by the Gandhian Movement and participated in the morning processions and slogan shouting. He took part also in the Freedom Struggle.

Manohar Malgonkar spent three years in Jagalbet after getting his degree. He arranged hunting expeditions for the visiting hunters which gave him up-to-date knowledge

of the skills, the tricks and the techniques of 'hunting'; so, he became an expert professional hunter. It was a rich source of knowledge and experience which became useful when he became a writer. Because of hunting, he came in contact with the British hunters and the Indian Princes. He was a close friend of Prince Vikram Singh (Chh. Shahaji of Kolhapur) of the Paur family of Dewas, who was a passionate hunter. This relationship with prince Vikram Singh became the source of many fruitful enterprise of Malgonkar's. In fact, Manohar Malgonkar had been in contact with the princes right from his childhood. His father was the Deewan of a small state in Madhya Pradesh. Malgonkar felt sympathy for the princes, because he knew their problems well due to his intimacy with Prince Vikram Singh. These factors created in Malgonkar an interest in history and shaped his attitude towards contemporary politics.

Prince Vikram Singh was educated, rational, generous and conscious of the changing time. Manohar Malgonkar became conversant with the private life of the Princes, their fear of insecurity, the misery of submission, the impotent helplessness and the mental strain in their exotic and captive life. Malgonkar found that injustice was done to some of these Princes due to the Freedom Movement. He

had natural youthful sympathy with the Freedom Movement and also feeling of deep compassion for the Princes whose life was great, glorious, rich and traditional. Malgonkar had historical vision; it had many aspects. He had sympathy for the Gandhian Freedom Movement and a nostalgic sentiment for the doomed Princes.

Malgonkar appeared for the IPS examination in 1937 and got selected. He was posted to cantonment management instead of the police service. He was transferred to 'field security service' which was a branch of the Army Intelligence Corps. Then he became a regular commissioned officer in the British Indian Army. He served in the Army cantonments in M.P., Rajstan and Punjab. He looked after the security arrangements for the transport of men and material between army stations. When World War II started, he got involved in it directly and he was sent back to cantonment management section. He did not like dull and routine work, but liked risky and rigorous work. Therefore, after two years, he opted for the regular army duties. He became an Army Intelligence officer and was posted to Delhi in 1946 as Lt. Colonel to army head quarters. He remained there upto 1952. Malgonkar's Office and residence were near the famous Birla House, the place where Mahatma Gandhi was later assassinated. Malgonkar was placed, after the war and after India got Independence, as in-charge of getting

and maintaining Intelligence information about the neighbouring countries of India-Nepal, Bhutan, China, Tibet and Burma. He travelled to the North and the North-East India due to his duty.

Malgonkar came in contact with Colonel Kerkar in 1946 during his army duties; and they become very close and intimate friends. They observed the hectic activities in Delhi from 1945 to 1952. They witnessed the political changes in Delhi and shared the fear, the anxiety and the expectancy which accompanied them. Malgonkar's career, his army life and his stay in Delhi formed the major bulk of his total experience. His life was dominated by the War, the Indian Independence and its aftermath. In 1937, he started his army career. At that time the war was imminent. There were full war activities in the cantonments; the regiments were ready to be sent to the different areas of War. The top officers were mostly the Britishers and the junior officers were mostly Indians. The junior officers were very much impressed by the top officers' eagerness, rigour, braveness in fighting and their zeal for the traditional values of valour, bravery and sacrifice Malgonkar did not take active part in the War, but he came into contact with the army officers and soldiers who had fought on the Burma front.

Many officers and soldiers narrated to him the tales of actual fighting. They fought with the Japanese in Burma, on Imphal border or during the occupation of the Andamans by the Japanese and their subsequent recapture by the British and in the retreat of the great Indian army when it entered the battlefield. These facts were narrated to Malgonkar which were the tales of actual fighting, the incidents of bravery, valour, heroism and 'harakiri' during the Burma War. Malgonkar visited many of these places when the memories of war were still a fresh. The tales of the soldiers and officers and Malgonkar's visits to the places of war have created their artistic echoes in his historical novels. He got the factual details from the soldiers and officers who experienced the war, he visited many places, and then he built a story. His vision was enriched and his character was moulded by his army life. He experienced the cantonment life, its strict rules, discipline, decorum, the petty jealousies among the army officers, the civil servants and the top military officers and constant feuds between them, the gradual deterioration of discipline and the military values when army and administration were Indianised, up-start politicians and their interference into army administration and the masculine nature of the private life in the army, etc. such type of a world of army. Malgonkar became aware of many

secret happenings which were unknown to the public for a long time. His administrative duties kept him in contact with men, material and machines constantly which were used in the Burma War before the Independence and on the Kashmir front after the war.

Malgonkar stayed in Delhi from 1946 to 1953. It was a unique experience . During this period Delhi became the main centre of action and of all important activities. With the freedom at midnight the power was transferred from the Britishers to the Indians. This was followed by the partition of the country. The country was divided into two nations-India and Pakistan. The Britishers decided to leave India and Indian leaders who demanded the Independence were not ready to face the consequences when Independence came. The Indian leaders were confronted with heavy responsibilities which were beyond their ability. They did not expect the holocaust which came so fast after the Independence that nobody even the great Lord Mountbatten, could not imagine it . Malgonkar who stayed in Delhi near the Birla House observed this changing political scenario and the unfolding history. His army life and his stay in Delhi during the crucial period of India's history have been the two essential aspects of Malgonkar's historical vision.

Malgonkar visited the U.S.A. in 1963 for publishing his third novel, The Princes . In 1964, when he visited U.S.A. again, the Literary Guild bestowed honour on him. In a special article in the Journal of the Literary Guild, he explained the background of the novel. In another novel Open Season he describes his experience of the American life and its effect upon the Indian scholars who visited America for the studies.

Malgonkar visited the Eastern countries, important places in Burma, the places famous for the war-Singapore, Malaya, Indonesia and Thailand. He had the first-hand topographical knowledge of the eastern sector of war; he got this knowledge by roaming through Arakon Jungles, the banks of the Irrawaddy and Sittang. He visited the Andamans, notoriously famous Cellular Jail and the natives of the Andamans, the ferocious Jaoras. The places gave him the factual knowledge about the war and he used the fascinating topographical authenticity of them in their description in his novels. He remembered the events, the places, the past and history and infused them into his fiction.

Manohar Malgonkar visited U.K. and there he became a professional writer. His publishers were the Britishers and his readers were in England and America.

His visits to U.K. were fruitful : His outlook was broadened and his style became refined. He came in contact with the eminent writers like E.M. Forster and Graham Greene. He visited Ladakh and Nepal during his service in the army and so had observed very closely the North and the North East India, he wrote about them later.

Apart from the literary influences, Malgonkar was influenced by two major relationships. (1) his love affair with a Punjabi girl, and (2) his close association with the Parsi families. These two things affected his career and life. He fell in love with a Punjabi girl; it was not a smooth love affair. He was a Brahmin and his beloved was a Punjabi, they married in 1946. The distant echoes of their love affair are found in Malgonkar's first novel Distant Drum. There is a resemblance between the hero, Kiran Garud and the novelist, the military code of Kiran and the code of the novelist. The novel has a slight autobiographical touch.

Malgonkar had very close relations with the Parsis - the Tatas, the Modys and The Petits, especially Fali Dinshaw Petit. His intimate relations and friendship with Parsis, the Chh. Shahaji Maharaj (The Prince Vikramsingh of Dewas) and his close contact with princely life shaped his political attitude towards the contemporary Indian history and politics.

They gave him a historical vision by which he could write the historical novels without partiality.

Manohar Malgonkar was the founder and active member of Swatantra Party. He worked on its working committee. He contested two Loksabha elections from Karwar Constituency, but he lost on both times. He gave up all his party authoritative posts and remained only as a ordinary member of it; but his political views remained unchanged. This private source of his political career and life provides another aspect to his historical vision.

After leaving the army in 1953, Malgonkar become an Exeucitve officer in an American firm but later on left the job. After that the started the mining business but he was unsuccessful in it. As a result of it, he faced an economic crisis, then he became a serious professional writer. Malgonkar tells James Dayanand about his failure in the job and his encounter with the business world.

"As soon as I left the army, I was the representative for an American firm in Delhi.....But I found that it was not a terribly satisfactory way of earning money.... I am not a pushing type who goes about selling things and that kind of things, to I found

things very difficult. So I gave up that job".¹

In other words, Malgonkar was not interested in the job. There was another reason behind this action; there were some private firms in prospecting the manganese mines in Goa and the Mysore state who were making huge profits. Malgonkar purchased a few mines, the business of prospecting the mines was a lucrative profession. Malgonkar's choice proved to be a blunder and as a result of it he has economically ruined. To overcome the financial problems, he turned to serious professional writing.

Manohar Malgonkar and E.M. Forster were friends. E.M. Forster admired Malgonkar's English Style. Malgonkar liked English literature during his school and college days. He studied the works of the great authors like Shakespeare, Diskens, G.B. Shaw and Galsworthy. He was also fascinated by Anglo-Indian novelists, Meadows Taylor, Rudyard Kipling, Somerset Maugham, E.M. Forster and Joseph Conrad were his favourite writers. Malgonkar says :

"To my mind no one has transformed the full; stinging flavour of the Indian peasant's language into English as Kipling has and

no other author has shown such a deep (almost embarrassingly deep) understanding of the character of the educated Indian as E.M. Forster has.²

Malgonkar liked the work of the modern British writers like Paul Scott, Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene. He admires the style of Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene, Malgonkar was influenced by Rudyard Kipling, E.M. Forster, Somerset Maugham, Joseph Conrad, Waugh and Greene because they were all good story-tellers. E.M. Forster acknowledges grudgingly, "Yesoh dear yes.....the novel tells a story."³ Somerset Maugham also admits the importance of story in the novel. Manohar Malgonkar acknowledges the influences of these writers upon him.

Malgonkar has a high regard for James Joyce, William Faulkner, Virginia Woolf and the Stream of Consciousness novelists; but these writers were not the lasting influence. According to him a good story well told is the chief fascination of the novel, is the moment it ceases to do it that it will die. The function of the novelist is to tell the story. In other words, the novelist must tell the story, it is his duty. Malgonkar without hesitation or apology declares:

"I do strive deliberately and hard to tell a story well and I revel in incident, in improbabilities, in unexpected twists".⁴

Malgonkar was influenced by the Anglo-Indian writers, the British writers and also the American novelists. Malgonkar admires the American novelist John. P. Marquand in the following words :

"John P. Marquand wrote from my sort of background and about my sort of people. I made a very deep study of his novels and of his craft. He has a great deal of polish, which I don't find in much American writing, and if any one has influenced my style, it has been him." 5

K.R. Shrinivas Iyengar compares Manohar Malgonkar with John Masters; Malgonkar partially agrees with him adding that John Masters is a good story-teller but he does not understand the Indian, character so well and there is a false ring in his Indian scenes; he looked at the revolt of 1857 as an Englishman, but Malgonkar looked at it as an Indian.

When we study the literary influences on Malgonkar and his visits abroad; we learn how his life has contributed to his historical vision.

When one meets Malgonkar, in the beginning he looks reserved, aristocratic and shy, but that is not the fact, he is quite an informal, gentle, simple, sincere and polite man. He loves and likes English etiquette, ways of behaviour, habits, manners, attitude to words life; besides, he is essentially Indian. Being an orthodox Brahmin, he has a sense of moral values and he dislikes the illicit sexual relations. He enjoys life with a healthy appetite and he avoids the excessive enjoyment and practises moderate enjoyment. He has a zest for life.

Malgonkar has a good knowledge of Sanskrit. He makes extensive use of the sanskrit epics and plays in his novels. He uses various myths in his novels such as the myth of Shiva, the God of destruction, the myth of Ganesh, the myth of Sita, the heroine of Ramayana. He takes the title of a novel from a line in Ramayana. He uses a couplet from Bhagwat Gita as a recurring refrain in another novel; one of the principal characters quotes verses from Gita.

Malgonkar is interested in the History of the Marathas. When James Dayanand asked him about choosing the History of the Marathas, Malgonkar replied. " I wish to know my history well. I have chosen a small corner of Maratha history itself." 6

According to Malgonkar, Indian history is too large. He knows his history large and he knows his history (the history of the Marathas) well; and hence, he has chosen it. His choice does not narrow his historical vision. For him history is a friend, a philosopher and a guide to mankind, which provides a guiding-light for future. Though Malgonkar loves English etiquette and literature, he possesses an Indian heart. There is a combined influence of the East and the West which is reflected in the Satpura code that the heroes of his novels embody. His heroes are civilized and cultured persons. Malgonkar himself believes in a civilized and cultured behaviour. The study of Malgonkar's private life and his milieu and a look at his works of his personal world explain his historical vision.

Malgonkar started his writing in 1950. He began with writing short stories for the magazines. After the failure in the mining business in 1955, he turned to professional writing. Several of his short stories were published in the Illustrated Weekly of India, Imprint, Encounter and Yojana. These stories were based on his actual military and hunting experiences. They attracted the attention of Peter S. Jayasinghe, the founder-owner of the Asia Publishing House, Bombay. Jayasinghe came across a booklet on

'Kanhoji Angrey', the Maratha naval chief, by Manohar Malgonkar. He found the booklet in an old bookshop in London. Sayasinghe liked the booklet and the style of the writer. He had found a writer with just and right attitude to history. So he entrusted the work to Malgonkar. As a result of it Malgonkar, wrote the book 'Kanhoji Angrey, the Maratha Admiral'. The book was published in 1959 by the Asia Publishing House, Bombay. The book was welcomed by the public and it got great success. This encouraged the author to explore new fields of historical sensibility.

Malgonkar, after this success, wrote four novels successively. He wrote Distant Drum in 1960. It is acclaimed by Prof. G.S.Amur as 'an epitaph for the British Indian Army.'⁷ C.L.Proudfoot remarks, " Malgonkar recaptured the atmosphere of the earlier days faithfully and right through the whole book runs the golden thread of authenticity with never a false note."⁸

In 1962, Malgonkar wrote Combat of Shadows. G.S. Amur has described the novel as 'one that tells the story of an Englishman's moral disintegration and death in the Indian Soil.'⁹ The novel depicts the Assam jungles and the Terrai forests which provide an ideal setting for the story of tea -plantation, hunting, lust and revenge. Malgonkar visited Assam and Nepal when he was in army. His adventure in

the mine business had failed. He had a brief experience as the manager in the south on a tea plantation. All these things are reflected in the novel. The two novels, Distant Drum and Combat of Shadows gave a lift to the critical financial condition of Malgaonkar. He wrote the family history of the Paur Family due to the request of Chhatrapati Shahaji Maharaj, Paur of Dewas Sr. Combat of Shadows was followed by The Princes (1963), the master piece and the best seller. Malgonkar had contacts with the Princes and they provided the material for this novel. It is a realistic and authentic novel about the Princely life in India. He states in the Literary Guild Review about the genesis of the novel. He worked on the book for twelve hours a day and finished it exactly in forty nine days. He says :

"For that time I was a Prince (an ex-prince if you will) and indulging a whim, I made my hero rule his state for just that many days." 10

In his interview with Professor James Dayananda, Malgonkar spoke about his long and close contacts with the Princes.

"My grandfather was the Prime Minister in one of the bigger states in India and I grew

up..... knowing the princely ways, knowing their peculiarities, knowing the little things that they did different from other people, knowing their little vanities. But that contact grew when I started my profession as a big game hunter and my clients were the most monied one could think of, were American millionaires or Indian Princes and one of them invited me to write the history of his family. So that gave me long enough contact, close contact with his family and with their attitudes and with their peculiarities to be able to write a book about princes.³ 11

The Princes was followed by A Bend in the Ganges (1964) which depicts the horror of the communal frenzy of the Partition. The novel describes the failure of Gandhiji's non-violent ideology. S.M. Garge's historical work in Marathi Karveer Riyasat was translated into English by Malgonkar in 1971 as Chhatrapatis of Kolhapur. Professor Iyengar says that the title of the novel A Bend in the Ganges, significantly enough comes from the Ramayana :

'At a bend in the Ganges, they paused to take a look at the land they were leaving.'³ 12

Malgonkar exposes the pervading nature of violence and its roots in his novel by analysing the life and the growth of three individuals, Gian Talwar, Debidayal and Shafi Usman, going through the gruelling mill of gruesome events. The whole story of the novel is spun around these three characters.

Malgonkar wrote a script 'Spy in Amber' for a Hindi film. His daughter put it into the form of a novel and published it in 1971.

In India, 1957 was celebrated as the centenary of the Revolt of 1857 ; Britishers called it a Sepoy Mutiny and Indians call it the first fight for Freedom. There were many books written on the occasion of the celebration : Mollie Kaye's Shadow of the Moon, Night runners of Bengal by John Master, Prof. N.R.Phatak's Sattavanchi Shipai Gardi, reprint of V.D. Savarkar's The Indian War of Independence. The European writers displayed a little more rational outlook than that of their former writers. The Indian authors over estimated the deeds of the Indian heroes and exaggerated the atrocities of the British-Generals. George Traveyan Calls the revolt 'The Devils Wind' (Shaitan ki Hava) The Devils' Wind is the fifth novel by Malgonkar. It is an outcome of the controversy between the British and the Indian authors. The novel is an attempt to tell the truth

from an Indian's point of view - of Nana Saheb. Malgonkar wrote - The Men who Killed Gandhi (1978), which is an authentic work on the death of Mahatma Gandhi. Malgonkar stayed in Delhi at the time of Gandhiji's assassination; he was an eye-witness to many incidents connected with the event. He presents the exact account of this event in the book.

Malgonkar's short stories appeared in three collections : 'A Toast in Warm Wine' (1974) 'Bombay Beware' (1975) and 'Rumble Tumble' (1977) . The Film 'Shalimar', produced and directed by Krishnakant Shah, is based on the story of Malgonkar's novel, He also wrote a novel Open Season (1978) for a film, but the film was never made. Bandicoot Run (1982) is a short novel of Malgonkar's about the international practice of spying. It has army life background and familiar characters, it reminds us of Distant Drum. Besides the novels and short stories, he wrote a play Line of Mars (1978) and Dead and Living Cities (1977), a collection of (non-literary) essays and also a few literary articles. He explains his literary creed and answers some controversies over his works in a few literary articles.

2.2 MANOHAR MALGONKAR'S HISTORICAL NOVELS

2.2.1 Distant Drum (1960), filling the atmosphere with the adventures of Generals, Brigadiers, Colonels, Captains Lieutenants and other ranks, this first novel of Malgonkar's, analyses the thrilling aspects of army life in India at the critical juncture in her history when on account of the Partition, the Hindus and the Muslims were involved in communal frenzy and madness. Most critics and reviewers have referred to the novel as as ' epitaph for the British army'.¹³ 'a symbolic presentaion of the Indian on counter with the British in the Army'¹⁴ and we find it deals with the Indo-British relationships at the personal level, in short, a documentation of life in the army. It is, however all this and something more-a human story of struggle and success and final achievement of a goal. G.S.Amur's opinion of the book is most probably based on what Malgonkar himself says:

'This book is largely the story of the success or failure of the efforts of one of the officers of the Regiment to live up to its code'.¹⁵

Distant Drum is a unique novel on army life, it has the historical background that is provided by true historical events and the political atmosphere in India during 1937-1949. The three events depicted in the novel are :

The Eastern phase of the Second World War, the Indian Independence and Pakistan's aggression of Kashmir. The novel is based on the army life in India, it describes the scenes of fighting and army camaraderie and the role of the Indian army in the Second World War through these scenes. The British built up an army after strengthening their rule in India; it was well-trained, well-organised and an efficient war machine, moulded on its British counterpart. The Fourth Division of the Indian army won laurels when it encountered with Herr Romel on the Western front; in spite of the initial setbacks it drove back the Japanese from the Indian borders on the Eastern front; it was an hour of glory for it. It put in a proud performance during the war, which is one of the major aspects of the historical vision in Distant Drum.

Before Independence there were British Senior officers in the Indian Army and most of the Junior Officers and soldiers were Indians and relations among themselves were cordial and homely. Senior British Officers looked upon their juniors and the jawans as their special wards. The regiment was like a family and they honoured and respected its 'izzat'. They helped each other in needs and difficulties. The familial relationship between the officers and their men in the Indian army has a historical significance due to the relationship created very diligently and maintained

very carefully by the British officials. The second aspect of the historical scene in Distant Drum is the Indo-British relationship in the Indian army during the war period of 1939-1945.

There was the transfer of power in India after the war. The British left India on 15 August, 1947. The British divided the nation into two : India and Pakistan. There were three important changes caused by the Independence and the partition of the country : 1) The British Officers left Indian army and their place was taken by their Junior Indian Officers who got quick promotions ahead of their time, even many of them were not qualified for the promotion. 2) The Independence was accompanied by Hindu-Muslim riots and the communal discord spoiled the communal harmony in the army. 3) The Indian politicians and civil servants interfered more and more with the army affairs , so the army affairs did not remain clean and honest as they were during the British regime. The discipline of the Indian army suffered serious setbacks with the political interference. Another result of the partition was the division of the army made on the communal basis that damaged seriously its efficiency as a reliable force to keep law and order in the riot torn areas. These changes brought the total disastrous effect on the Indian army and had serious consequences within the next

twenty years. This is the third historical aspect of the novel.

Pakistan made an aggression on Kashmir within months after the Independence. Indian soldiers were taken to Kashmir and when they confronted the raiders, they found that the invaders were their own former brother soldiers who were now a part of the enemy army. The situation was strange and unfortunate, it was the sign of political significance and it forms the fourth historical aspect of the novel.

As long as the British officers commanded the Indian army, it was one of the finest institutions; any nation would be proud of it. There was a perfect and harmonious army life and the relations between the Indians and Britishers were normal ideally. The British officers, being trained in the public schools of England, brought a gentlemanly code of behaviour to India that maintained the discipline and the cordial relationship which were the unique qualities of the Indian army. Malgonkar calls this code the Satpura code which is a pattern of civilized behaviour and comprised of qualities that have ancient historical significance. When the British left India this code began to disappear from the Indian army slowly. A few Indian officers tried to retain the code values but their plans were spoiled by new army recruits who had strange

patriotic ideas, by senior officers who got delight in creating procedural difficulties, by civil servants who degraded them by calling them 'mere soldiers with meagre salaries,' and by politicians who managed to transfer them when they denied to lend the new shamiana for the minister's reception. Malgonkar presents the two pictures of army :1) The first is of the Pre-Independence India, (2) The second is of the Post-Independence India; on 15th August 1947, the Indian 'army's deterioration started. Malgonkar hints at the political danger, which this situation gave as a warning to the Indian army. Malgonkar gives a warning in the following words

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'Now, perhaps, many facts which could not have been revealed then can be revealed. For instance, the military defeat, Menon, our Defence Minister, and Nehru..... and his advisers were almost directly responsible, were almost criminally responsible for the humiliation we suffered and the defeat at the hands at the hands of the Chinese.' 16

Being an army officer in the British-Indian Army, Malgonkar found that the British officials followed a certain pattern of gentlemanly behaviour. He collects the salient

features of this behaviour and puts them into a code, the Satpurs code. Every junior officer of the 4th Satpura Regiment was ceremoniously initiated into the values of the code by the commanding officer himself. The CO would say to the subaltern;

'In the Regiment, we are first and foremost, gentlemen No Satpura officer ever consciously does anything that would hurt the Regiment's izzat.. We try to live up to what you might call the code of the Regiment We don't always succeed, of course, but we try. We try very, very hard.' (p.g.)

And then he would declare the elements of code: 'First and foremost, we always finish off our tigers. Always , secondly, when two of us have a bet, only one checks up..... the other one takes his word, always. Thirdly we never say 'I don't know'; we always say instead, 'I'll find out'. That's because we take our professional responsibilities very, very seriously.'(P.g.)

The hero of the novel Kiran Gaud is a Satpura officer. Ropety Booker introduces him to this code and

gradually Kiran becomes a champion of the code during his army career and he becomes the code's proud mouthpiece. The entire process of 'taking in' and 'dishing out' the values of the code by Kiran Garud is a fine example of Malgonkar's imagination against a historical background. 'Taking in' and 'dishing out' are army terms; in other words, they are the two phases of the Satpura code. 'Taking in' is related with learning and 'dishing out' is related with testing. The incidents in 'taking in' and 'dishing out' phases are fictitious but they are set against the background of army life in India and the political atmosphere in Delhi after the Independence. Malgonkar has filled them with historical authenticity. The close contacts between the British officers and the Indian jawans in the cantonments and on the battle field and the assumption of power by the Congressman like the Lala after the British left are historical facts. Malgonkar uses the code values to portray his heroes and to project their sustained significance vis-a-vis the Indian army after the Independence.

The army camaraderie governed the Indo-British and the Hindu-Muslim relationship in the context of the Indian army; it is an important aspect of the Satpura code. Malgonkar's historical imagination unfolds this aspect by giving the pictures of the camaraderie between Kiran Garud and Abdul Jamal and between Ropey Booker and his jawans.

There is the mutual trust and affection between the two parties, it is a fascinating picture K.R.S. Iyengar says : ' But take it all in all, the army is a much cleaner thing than a mere political party '. 17

Malgonkar depicts the picture of this camaraderie through various events in the novel. The friendship between Kiran and Abdul proves Kiran secular and free from religious and racial prejudice; it is the excellent example of the relationship and Satpura code. Kiran and Abdul were together in the military academy and Abdul was a term junior to Kiran. Kiran helped Abdul several times to steer him clear of the mistakes which made his senior subaltern or Adjutant angry with him. But it is their affair with Medley that made them real friends. Abdul saves Kiran twice-once in an inquiry made about Medley's suicide when Abdul gave evidence and cleared Kiran from any involvement in the Medley affair. Abdul knows the love affair between Morgot Medley and Kiran but when Bod Medley committed suicide, Abdul saves Kiran in the inquiry; he lied to save Kiran. Kiran says : ' Abdul shall I tell you something ? It is nice to know that there are people like you in army-in this regiment ' (P.39)

Abdul saves Kiran second time, at the time of riots in Delhi in September 1947. When Kiran was surrounded by a Muslim mob and about to be assaulted, Abdul

30 threatened to kill the mob if they did as much as touch a hair of Kiran.

Kiran and Abdul's friendship had a more rigorous test during the communal riots in Delhi when the atmosphere was tense with the communal frenzy. Kiran and Abdul wandered all over the city trying to help the needy and to pacify the quarrels:

'No one had asked them to work, but once having plunged in, there was no going out. You never left your tigers half-dead', (p. 230).

Here we find the reference to one of the principles of the Satpura code in the description of this historical situation which is significant, Abdul saved Kiran from the mob. Malgonkar was also actually involved in similar incident and even saved by the intervention of a Muslim friend,. Malgonkar used a fact and created a dramatic situation. Friendship triumphs over the religious fanaticism. we find the historical significance of the incident in the following words:

'But one thing stood out, although neither of them could have thought about it at the time. Neither he nor Abdul had been conscious of the fact that they belonged to the opposing factions in the riot.....that one was a Hindu, the other a Muslim on the verge of setting out for a world of new values.

What stood out magnificently secure in that holocaust was the fact that although they belonged to the two opposing communities crazed with vengeance and thirsting for blood, he and Abdul had been able to work together in the closest accord, their loyalties to each other absolutely unruptured by that incessant strain',
(pp. 230-231)

It is the irony of fate that these two friends who together participated in the Burma Campaign were separated by Partition. The entire story of this friendship is a part of the Satpura code. The code disappeared very fast from the Indian army; hence Malgonkar laments. The triumph of Malgonkar's historical imagination is found in the authenticity of the picture and the nostalgic sentiment that accompanied it.

Another example of the army camaraderie is provided by Ropey Booker, almost a father to his jawans, who helped the jawans, wives and children and solved their problems. He always advised his officers to cultivate the confidence of their men. Ropey Booker is a fictional figure but he resembles actual army officers and reflects the background of the army life in India. The resemblance gives him historic authenticity. The picture of Kiran-Abdul friendship or Ropey-

jawans camaraderie contrasted with the mean and jealous behaviour of Kamala Kant, Col. Namdev and others in the G.H.O.

It clearly points out what we have lost after the Independence. When the British left India, the code values disappeared from the Indian army, It has a great historical legacy.

The principal theme of the novel is associated with the development of the Satpura code. Kiran Garud the hero of the novel is a Satpura officer. There is resemblance between the hero Kiran and Malgonkar but Kiran is fictional figure and a creature of Malgonkar's imagination, He is at the centre of the action and at the three aspects of the narrative 1) Kiran-Bina love affair, 2) the development of the Satpura code, and 3) the deterioration of the Indian army due to political interference. The three aspects of the narrative are interlinked and interact frequently on one another, for example Govind Ram Sonal's (Bina's father) opposition to the marriage of Kiran and Bina Sonal, on the one side, obstructs the smooth development of their love; on the other, it tests Kiran's loyalty to the code; and yet on another side, it shows how the administrative interference spoiled the efficiency of army. Kiran alone tries to uphold the code values, it has a tragic grandeur. Kiran individually succeeds in his fight but the code is vanishing slowly. It seems there is ambivalence in Malgonkar's declaration,

'Distant Drum is a story of success or failure'. (p.10) , it indicates the tragi—melodramatic outlook. In spite of Kiran's happy reunion with Bina Sonal and the 4th satpura's, Kiran is a tragic hero.

Malgonkar by setting Kiran at the whirlpool of modern Indian politics, gave an authentic historical stature to Kiran. Tragic note in his character is a deliberate device which indicates the failure of the Satpura code concealed under its apparent victory.

There are two sets of characters in the novel which have the two opposing tendencies: one for and the other against the code. The first set of characters consists of the British army officer who are the Satpura code models, for example; Ropey Booker, Bull Hampton and Bertie Howard. In their behaviour we find the consistency of a civilian code. The other set of characters is all Indians and consists of Lala Vishnu Saran Dev, Govind Ram Sonal, Col. Namdev and Col. Ramdev and Kamalakant and Major Rawal Singh. Lalaji is the symbol of the new politicians in India. He requests Garud to lend him the army tent for the political meeting. When Kiran Garud declines to do so stating specifically that the regiment never gives it "for a political gathering".(p) Lala threatens:

{ Coynelsaab,.....I would shay that in refusing this ishmall favour you are running a great rishk. He may complain to your

to your minister. You must remember that this will amount to belittling a minister of the government of which you are only a servant.² (pp. 60-61)

Though Lala 'lacks the depth of later portraits....and is almost a caricature'¹⁸ he has a political significance. Politicians like the Lala are scattered all over the country and they do hold fast to the faith. "Now the party and the government are the shame"¹⁹ Malgonkar shows that the army and the ruling party are not on good terms and that strained relations exist between them. Malgonkar gives further instance of the Indian character to work diligently in his theme of its evil political influence. Govind Ram Sonal disapproves of his daughter's attraction for Kiran Garud and he used his influence to get him transferred out of Delhi in order to prevent further development in Kiran-Bina's love affair. He is so callous and shameless and he himself tells Kiran how he managed it and why he did it.

Malgonkar's analysis of Indian characters reveals from different angles the evil of Indian Politics. The Lalas, the Namdevs, the Ramdevas, the Balgopals and the Sonals lack civilised code of behaviour. These crafty, unprincipled politicians, selfish and pompous civil servants and the self-centred, narrow-minded administrative officers had destroyed the glorious tradition of the British Army which had historical significance.

Malgonkar uses the technique of contrast to bring out his principle theme-the decline of Indian army as a result of the political interference in its affairs. Malgonkar uses contrast in case of the choice of his characters as well as of his situations allotted to the British characters high light their courage, discipline and army camaraderie while the situations assigned to the Indian characters reveal their selfish, unethical, self centred and corrupt character. The battle of the Twin Pagoda-hill and that of the Sittang Bridge are delineated accurately; these war scenes illustrate the Satpura code values of the British officials. Kiran Garud's encounter with the Co-ord, the administration and the Accounts Department bring out their anti-Satpura nature. The Indian administration in Delhi is a part and parcel of the contemporary history, Malgonkar delineates it very powerfully and he says:

'Broadly translated, it described a state of mind in which officials had begun to use procedure not to avoid mistakes: ~~but to avoid~~ but to avoid decisions. The tendency was to seek shelter behind some obscure but impregnable bastion of procedure and strenuously resist the need to make a decision. That was what they delighted in, and only when a decision could no longer be ~~de~~ delayed,

they tried desperately to make someone else responsible for taking it? (P. 123)

We find that Distant Drum is a novel with the contemporary history. General Kaul's Untold Story is history. The indentity between the two reveals how Malgonkar's imagination functions logically and historically.

The technique of contrast is used by the novelist while depicting the places, so he emphasises the degeneration of Army. After the Independence even the cantonments have undergone a change for the worse :

'In the past, Indian cantonments had an atmosphere all their own. As soon as you entered a cantonment area, you were aware of the difference; there was no need of sign-bords telling you that you were now inside cantonment limits' The campus was bleak, grim and shabby after the Independence. Kiran finds after his return to Raniwada: 'none of the bungalows bore the cantonment look any longer. They had not been painted for over ten years, their gardens were over grown with weeds, and their hedges had been allowed to grow untrimmed. They looked unkempt and musty, like houses in some

abandoned town, they all looked haunted'. (P. 41).

Kamala Kant who got command of the 4th Satpura battalialian after a few years of his service was the representative of the new order. He lost its former glory and he was in confusion absolutely. By the use of contrast Malgonkar brings out effecttively the historical significance of the degeneration of the Indian Army after the Independence. It shows Indian politics and the politicians are responsible for it.

For the purpose of the narrative structure. Malgonkar divides his material into two parts: (1) the second week of August 1949, (2) the time of the Shingargon. Infantry Commanders Annual conference provides the dividing line. The nature of the division is almost the pre-Independence and period the post-Independence period, though this is two years after the Indian Independence. The first part is narrated through the use of the flashback method and the second part forms a continuous chronolgical narrative. The flashbacks cover eleven years and the continuous narrative covers hardly six months. However, this division of material has a thematic significance. The first past brings out the glorious background of the Indian army under the British officers. The flashbacks with their nostalgic note indicate that this is all now a part of history. The second part reveals the

contemporary present and hints at the future.

Disstant Drum is an outstanding novel on the army life. Distant Drum was lauded by K.R.S. Iyengar as a novel of "unusual distinction".²⁰ William Walsh observes that Distant Drum has "racy but rather indulgent account of the Indian army from an officer's point fo view."²¹

It is a fictionalised autobiography of Malgonkar himself. The eleven years of Kiran Garud's army career resemble those of Malgonkar's during the same period. The TLS reviewer notices it and says:

"We accept the main thesis as written out of direct autobiographical experience and salute it." ²²

The novel Distant Drum is Malgonkar's artistic transformation of his experience into a novel. The novel recaptures "The atmosphere of the earlier days faithfully and right through the whole book runs the golden thread of authenticity with never a false note."²³ In the texture of the basic story of a regiment that maintains its equanimity in spite of crushing defeats and glorious victories, the author with his masterly touch and sensitive handling, has successfully recaptured in his book, the spirit of Indian soldiers, their ideals, their shortcomings, their depressions and their singular devotion and valour in the wake of crisis which has a historical significance. We find Distant Drum is a down-to earth real story entirely engrossing and absorbing

a novel throbbing and pulsating with sensitivity, written in fascinating and sparkling prose. Meenakshi Mukherjee observes:

"Malgonkar in his First novel worked within his limitations and succeeded in writing an honest remarkable novel."

24

2.2.2

COMBAT OF SHADOWS

Combat of Shadows (1962) is the second well constructed novel of Malgonkar's which appeared immediately after the first novel Distant Drum and based on Malgonkar's experience of plantation life, his visits to Assam and the North-Eastern States during his army career and this love for hunting G.S. Amur has described the novel as one that : 'tells the story of an Englishman's moral disintegration and death in the Indian soil'.²⁵

The novel is very much in the tradition of Kipling, E.M. Forster, Paul Scott, John Masters and Ruth Praver Jhabwala who have all tried to portray the Englishman, the sahib in India. While they have all, more or less, concentrated on the same period of British Imperialism in India and their inability to master the vast problems of the land they ruled, Malgonkar has focused on the signal failure and the degenerating defect in the life of his main character in the novel, Henry Winton. It is quite obvious that the plot of the novel evolves from two themes - racial encounter and the hero's moral decay and death. The various incidents in the novel eventually lead up to the final point, the hero's realization of the 'moment of truth'.

The novelist is critical of the the Indian nationalism of the colonial period in Combat of Shadows. The critical stance is worked out by the author's equal detachment from both sides

of the picture thus bringing into focus the doubtful actions, motives and ideals of both sides. The theme of this novel is the ruling Britisher's prejudice against their subject race, and of the Indians' consequent hatred for their rulers. There is much more to this novel than racial prejudice and communal animosity. There is also a portrayal of the dark side of Indian political and politicians of this time. The novel Combat of Shadows is based on Malgonkar's experiences as a planter and as a hunter. It is not a historical novel proper but a romance which is an excellent example of Malgonkar's historical imagination who uses a small and marginal historical background, a rapid developing and swift moving tale, coincidence, fate and irony in his narration and maintains the atmosphere of romantic fantasy so the novel becomes a romance. Malgonkar does not emphasize history but the novel has a historical perspective.

The hero, Henry Winton of Combat of Shadows has a background of Second World war, a bigger and wider combat. British goods became scarce at Chinnar and some old British Managers got extension in service as fresh batches stopped coming to India due to the war. War makes further in-roads into the story. Jean comes to India late and alone due to war, so she comes into contact with Eddie Trevor. If she had come to India with Henry Winton, her husband, she would have no previous contact with Eddie. Perhaps Winton's life would not have taken the turn that it did if this contact had not been there.

To avoid confrontation with Jungal Kishore and get over his suspicion about Jean, Henry Winton tries to go to the war but Sir Jeffrey Dart prevents him under an obtainable reason of killing the one - tusker. Eddie's unfortunate death prevents him from participating in the war. Though this war is largely in the remote background, it shapes the destinies of the major characters in the novel. Thus the war has the historical influence on the novel.

The other historical influence on the novel is the political situation in India, particularly in Assam after the 1937 elections of the State Assembly that had given India the provincial autonomy as per the Indo-British Pact of 1935, so, the Congress politicians had the first taste of power. Jungal Kishore, a former chief stockman on the Silient Hill tea plantation got elected and became the Minister of Plantation. Jungal Kishore is the representative of the politicians who were the followers of Gandhi and Nehru and later on become the leaders of the people. This 'low caste Indian', (P.33) Jugal Kishore is ugly and repulsive in his words and actions with his 'blunted puffy roundness of feature, the opaque half closed eyes,' (P .33), who can twist matters to serve his own interests. When Jungal Kishore becomes the Minister,; he threatens professional career of Winton and prevents him from going on the war. In the action of the novel the historical events do not take active place but shape the course of the domestic events in the hero's life and assume the

role of Winton's providence indirectly.

Henry Winton, a manager of a British tea estate in Assam and a representative of the British ruling class; in India; is generally honest and well intentioned but soon he finds himself in a situation which is not only puzzling and demoralising but also dehumanising for him. There were Indian workers and coolies who worked on his garden. This situation brings in the delicate and sensitive issue of the Indo-British relationship invariably. This racial relationship automatically attain a political-historical significance. The time is 1937-40, just after the first Assembly elections in India and before the Second World War.

Malgonkar's interest in history is not that of an entertainer; history is not just the rubbish-room of human life where romantic material is attained for stories. Past is a back extension of the present and it is a lighthouse for the future. Malgonkar uses the contemporary history which has political overtones, since it is linked with the contemporary politics inexorably. Malgonkar practises the theory of George Lukacs : 'The essential aim of the novel is representation of the way the society moves'.

26

Malgonkar's novel plays an important role in the changing society, in solving the problems arising out of social political and

and historical turmoil. According to Malgonkar the responsibility of creating communal harmony primarily rested with the British because they ruled the country. The code of gentlemanly behaviour in Distant Drum also becomes the yard-stick of gentlemanliness in Combat of Shadows. The values of the code are identical in both the novels. Kiran Garud succeeds in his life due to Satpura code values; on the other hand, Henry Winton fails to inculcate them, so he is defeated finally. Winton is set against the historical background of the Assam tea plantation in 1940 and the novelist links Winton's moral degeneration to the political situation in India and shows his tragedy was a kind of just punishment for evil which is the result of his failure in the historical Indo-British relationship and the lack of the Satpura code values. There is no scope in the novel for the novelist's disgust for the Indian politicians; through the character of Jungal Kishore, he laughs and sneers at them. Jungal Kishore's rise from a minor official to the stature of the Minister provides a historical point to the plot and it also acts a commentary on the Indian politicians and politics. Malgonkar uses the strategies of the code and the nemesis revealing his historical imagination.

Mutual trust and courage are the two principal characteristics of the Satpura code values. Malgonkar takes a negative approach while emphasizing the code values, denying the negative is often the more emphasizing way than merely

stating the affirmative. Henry Winton lacks the Satpura code, hence, he is an anti-satpura code hero, an alter-ego of Kiran Garud. Once again through Winton, Malgonkar declares the importance of the code values in the context of Indian life. Winton lacks the qualities of the gentleman hero - compassion and understanding for his Indian subordinates, and courage. In the historical exposition of Malgonkar's theme the Satpura code becomes his principal imaginative device.

The main theme of the novel Combat of shadows is a young man's alienation from his environment due to the lack of the Satpura code values in him. Henry Winton is a public school educated young Englishman, and expert hunter and the efficient manager of the Silent Hill tea garden in Assam. He is admired by all and has the best of everything; he did not encounter any problem during his first five years career in India. Sir Jeffrey Dart has a very favourable opinion about him, who chooses Winton of all the managers to hunt the notorious rogue-elephant and selects him in the company's prestigious rough shoot competition team during the Chinnar Week Celebrations. Henry Winton was specially favoured.

Ruby Miranda loves him. She forsakes Eddie Trevor, her childhood-lover and becomes Winton's mistress without any

regret. Winton himself savours the readiness with which she accepts all, his wishes. When Winton went to Calcutta for his Christmas holidays, he remembered her eagerly. She is the rare mixture of the submissiveness and surrender of oriental womanhood. She is the woman with freedom and gaiety of the West. She is 'content with him the way he was, even prepared to sacrifice the love of her childhood sweetheart for him'. (P.116)

Jean Walters is attracted towards him in their very first meeting. Even Jungal Kishore, a Chief Stockmen, becomes a menace in his life; at first he likes him and even offers his niece Gauri as a mistress to procure her the job of a school-mistress at the garden. Pasupati, a worker on the Silent Hill tea estate is devoted to Winton like his father Kistulal, who believed in the qualities and skills of Winton as a hunter - 'Sahib can shoot steady, I know that, and place his bullets exactly where he wants them. And I know Sahib will not run away'. (P.83).

In the end of the novel all these characters come together aligning themselves against him and swear to take revenge and plot his death. Jungal Kishore and Gauri destroy his peaceful professional life and Jean Walters destroys his domestic happiness who turns her back upon him. Sir Jeffrey, Ruby, Pasupati plot against him and send him to a terrified death. Even his public school values which he imbibed during his schooling get rudely shaken and shattered during their clash with the world of business.

The main cause of his alienation is found in his own character. His racial attitude is one of his damaging qualities. His hatred for the Indians arises from the historical fact that he belongs to the ruling class, whereas they belong to the ruled class and his consequent failure attains a historical significance. He comes into close contact with the non-British communities in India as the manager of tea garden. He fails to win the love of his colleagues and workers due to his formal, cold, stubborn behaviour and haughty nature. The action of Combat of Shadows reaching the highest point in his death shows in him the lack of the quality of racial fellow-feeling which was a historical need of his time. It caused his downfall. The various levels of this human relationship are worth noting.

After many professional failures, Henry Winton comes to India. He adopts a wrong professional approach in his determination to succeed at all costs. He does not mix with the Indians and avoids any personal contact with them. When Cockburn suggests to him that they may spend their evening in Tinapur watching the gala at the Railway Institute, he makes a wry face. The whole thing reminds Henry of something 'cheap and noisy, something unrefined', and something like the ramping of drunken sailors with blind dated girls in water

front joints. Gala is something like 'chichi' and 'honky tonk' the currency of pidgin English. Anglo-Indian accent and speech are different from those of a pucca sahib. In the novel the novelist depicts the living conditions, aspirations, attitudes and activities of Anglo-Indians who live in the Railway Institute at Tinapur which is the centre of the life and activities of the Anglo-Indians. Henry expresses his horror and disgust of the social life of the Anglo-Indians at the Institute:

'The atmosphere! you could have cut it with a knife, the accent and the chalk-powder and the perfume.....Anglo Indian at play! ugh'. (P.18)

Because of his prejudice, he is not able to appreciate the beauty of Ruby. Cockburn another pucca sahib, admires the girls in the Railway Institute:

'A single girl like that Ruby Miranda is worth the whole pack of your ice-cold Highlands Club females, cats without claws and all the fun drained out. Give me the Railway Institute every time, and you can keep the Highland club', (PP.18-19)

Henry Winton's superiority complex is so unreasonable that he does not like Cockburn's calling the restaurant boy by his first name 'Abdul' Jugal Kishore in his farewell meeting warns

Winton :

'We all have our failings Mr. Winton. Your failing is that you cannot bear Indians; yet your tragedy is that you are doomed to work in this country'.
(PP.111-12)

Winton refuses having any sexual relations with the Indian women due to his racial arrogance. When Cockburn teases him about it, he declares that he will remain alone without such relations with a coolie woman. Later on he accepts Cockburn's advice about Ruby Miranda. We find, Winton fails in his relations with Ruby and Jean Walters due to his racial discrimination. When he receives Eddie Trevor's application for the Chief Stockman, he remembers that it was advised to Eddie by Ruby Miranda. He remembers her surprising cry in the previous evening when he gave her earclips and took it in a wrong sense as a joyous exclamation for Eddie's coming to Silent Hill. The thought of marriage with Ruby never enters in Winton's mind due to his consciousness of her being an Anglo-Indian. There is the presence of the racial feeling in Winton. In another scene we find that he becomes angry when Ruby throws away the French perfume bottle; he calls her, ' you half-caste slut; you chi-chi street walker'.(P. 153) Henry's reaction is inhuman and cruel. He shows his racial superiority. We find, Winton hates the

non-British which is his damaging quality.

Henry betrays Ruby Miranda and does not feel guilty in marrying Jean only because he wishes to maintain his identity with the West. He neglects the warning given by Cockburn and marries Jean Walters. However, when he discovers that she has had illicit relationship with Eddie Trevor, an Anglo-Indian, his racial hatred for the non-British awakens and he sends Eddie to his death. Eddie Trevor's death, however, is deliberate and calculated. If Kistulal's death is the beginning, Eddie's death is the end. The process of moral degradation is complete, and where Henry Winton thinks that he has succeeded, he has really failed. By death Eddie become a martyr and won victory over Henry who is proved to be a criminal. Henry's greatest failure is that he has disregarded values. The quality of being human and understanding one's fellow creatures, be they Indians, Anglo-Indians, or English, is more important than any material success.

Henry Winton does not feel any prick of conscience when Jean leaves him for good, on the contrary, he feels a little elated. He suffers for the racial hatred. Malgonkar gives a number of hints about it. The racial conflict is brought out very prominently in Henry's confrontation with Ruby and Eddie on one hand, Jugal Kishore and Gauri on the other. Henry Winton is a failure with

the Anglo-Indian and also with the Indians. Malgonkar, however, stresses on the point that Henry Winton's failure is due to the fact that he insults the feelings of a woman. The novel starts with his insults of Gauri followed by his betrayal and rejection of Ruby's love and Jean's womanhood. It is significant that both Gauri and Ruby threaten to kill him in order to take revenge on him. During the labour strike led by Gauri and; her brother, Henry hits her brother black and blue. She gets so angry then she looks like 'a hooded cobra' about to strike or 'an outraged temple goddess 'and hisses. 'I shall kill you for this you white monster I shall kill you', (P.139) For this she is also beaten in the presence of the coolies. This very name Gauri is symbolical of feminine strength and power in Hindu mythology and it seems that the novelist chooses this name with a purpose' When Ruby Miranda leaves Winton, she swears to take revenge :

'I will kill you for this, Henry winton. No matter how long it takes. I shall kill you for what you have done and what you have said'. (P. 153)

Jean Walters leaves him and goes to Poona to stay with her aunt in his absence. She decides that she would never come back to him. Henry Winton realises his mistakes but was too late. When he meditates over the sad downfall of his domestic life, he realises that it had started with his decision to go away from Ruby at the warning of Sudden Dart. Henry's involvement with Ruby is a significant part of the narrative. Malgonkar begins his novel with Henry Winton's wild and foolish love for her and shows his going to his downfall, still dreaming of his union with her. We find, Malgonkar has excellent imagination. Henry's main fault is that he is not able to understand Ruby's nature and he has gone against his natural inclinations in his rejection of Ruby.

Henry Winton's all-over moral degeneration that makes him gloat over his crime and sets him on the path of self-destruction is primarily caused by his feeling of racial superiority. As a hunter he considers himself responsible for Kistulal's death, but as an Englishman he agrees quietly in the conception that Cockburn suggests to him, he sacrifices his hunter's sense of honour for the sake of his career in India. Cockburn warns him, "To lose face with the Indian is your death warrant", (P.91). But Winton realises that there was no room in India for sahibs who failed, that was the overriding truth; they were despised even more by their own class than by the Indians.

Winton's hatred for Eddie is unwarranted by any other reason except personal jealousy and racial feeling. Eddie treats him with respect though he does not. Though Winton takes away his beloved, he didn't show outward resentment. Winton's hatred for Eddie springs from his racial arrogance.

Winton's attitude towards the workers of his garden is that of cold indifference when they threaten to go on strike, he coldly asks them to withdraw their notice without condition. He separates the leaders from the workers when the strike begins, and orders to arrest the workers, men and women, and he threatens to ruin them. All this behaviour shows his racial arrogance. There are three shadowy enemies of Winton : Ruby Miranda, Jugal Koshore and Gauri, Sudden Dart and Pasupati whom he alienates through his racial snobbishness. Everybody of this group turned against him because he has hurt each one through his racial pride. The trust of this overall alienation dawns upon him during the last moments of life.

Malgonkar creates the British Characters Cockburn and Sir Jeffrey Dart to accentuate the folly of Winton's racial approach through contrast. Cockburn provides the other extreme of racial attitude who brings out more effectively

the unethical nature of Winton's attitude. Cockburn has become one with the natives of India, he treats Indian workers with love and humanity. It is a historical fact, Cockburn is not an ideal character but his failings are individualistic, not like a British manager. There is another character who shows ideal racial relationship, Sir Jeffrey Dart who is competent and well-versed thoroughly in human relations. The irony is that Sudden Dart was Eddie's step-father and Henry never knew it till the end. Sudden Dart knows that Eddie is his son. Sir Sudden Dart Jeffrey keeps two secrets and carries his moral duties and filial responsibilities.

Cockborn and Sir Jeffrey Dart succeed as managers because they do not suffer from the racial complex. Winton fails because he lacks courage, both physical and moral. He is a coward. His fear leads him to his moral degeneration. At first it is only latent fear, a shadow lurks in his heart so there is the deep fear of failure. There is the clash of this shadow with his environment which leads him to his failure. This shadow becomes a major force of his destiny which leads him to a path of moral degeneration and evokes physical fear and brings about a total moral disintegration. Combat of Shadows is the story of a man's failure to overcome the deep seated fear of defeat. The title and epigraph

of Combat of Shadows are taken from Bhagwat Gita : Desire and aversion are opposite shadows. Those who allow themselves to be overcome by their struggle can not rise to a knowledge of reality. In this connection M.K. Naik observes :

'The Moral issues indicated here are however, nowhere in evidence in the action and the characters in the novel'.²⁷

Malgonkar describes this shadowy combat through various imaginative situations which reveal how fear ultimately contributes to the nemesis which is for Winton. Malgonkar exposes Henry Winton's weakness through a flashback which he delineates further by describing three more incidents that bring out his moral cowardice : 1) Kistulal's death due to his misfired cartridges, 2) During the strike he displays physical courage and takes swift and ruthless action against workers; 3) Before the strike, Sir Jeffrey Dart's veiled warning about Winton's love affair with Ruby Miranda. Winton is so terribly frightened by the warning so he takes a premature 'home leave' and hurriedly goes to England.

The Novel is divided into two parts : 1) 'Prelude' to 'Home Leave'. 2) 'Return from Home leave'. In the first part there is a chain of incidents which reveals Henry Winton's flaw. The second part shows the consequences of the drawback in Henry

Winton's character. The moral fear undermines his physical courage also, for example he is afraid of the rogue elephant. It is not Winton who tries to kill the elephant but it is rather the elephant who looks for him and seeks out the man who had vowed to destroy him. It is also relevant to mention that Henry Winton's downfall starts with the elephant hunt. The elephant is treated by the locals as Lord Ganesh. Henry has come into conflict with it.

Malgonkar gives the rogue elephant an almost historical identity by comparing it with Jugal Kishore, the Indian Politician and Herr Adolf Hitler, the dictator of Germany who is responsible for the destruction in the Second World War. Winton tries to escape this challenge to his courage but Jugal Kishore in his new historic role as the Minister compels him to undertake the hunt of one-tusker and prevents his escape to the war. These events show that Winton becomes a puppet in the hands of his self-carved destiny and he is dragged to his nemesis. G.S. Amur rightly observes :

'The ending of Combat of Shadows has the perfect symmetry of a Greek nemesis..... in his violent death, Winton pays at once the price of fear, lust, betrayal and murder'. 28

Malgonkar does not criticise Henry Winton being as a British manager but criticises him ;due to his devoid of the Satpura code values. All the British managers are not like him. Jean Walters, wholly and unmistakable English, ;doesnot share his recial prejudice and her out going and spontenious nature offers a complete contrast to the inhibited and jealous tendencies in Winton's personality. Though Jean is as pucca as Henry Winton, she likes Eddie and is ready to marry him and leave Henry Winton. Love crosses all colour and racial prejudice, it is that which Henry Winton exactly lacks. Here Malgonkar shows himself as different from John Masters and Kipling, by spotlighting the sahib in his depravity. Cockburn, Wallach, Henry Winton and Sir Sudden Dart nobody is an exception. They could not treat either Anglo-Indians or Indians on equal terms at least as human beings. They have simply utilized them for their pleasure and service. Morals have no place in their dealings with them. They safeguard their own interests and they are more worried about the image of their government in India than about other considerations and they can not tolerate any failure on the part of their men and any cowardly talk about the capacity of the British in the war.

Malgonkar has focussed on the weaknesses of Sahibs. The Sahibs are not paragons of virtue. The basic emotions and

feelings like jealousy, envy, anger, revenge, love and ambition are all common in any race or religion. Unlike John Masters and Kipling, Malgonkar is able to depict the anxieties and complexities of the Sahibs and the Anglo-Indians in such a manner that they are able to attract sympathy.

Malgonkar's criticism of Henry Winton is of an individual in a peculiarly planned historical situation. Kai Nicholson observes this fact :

'Manohar Malgonkar seems to have been influenced by Forster's method of criticism; the sahibs at Chinnar are scrutinised not English society as a whole'.²⁹

Winton walks into his death, manoeuvred by his British boss. His alienation from English world and Indian world is due to his lack of the Satpura code values, courage. George Orwell correctly sums up Winton's burden :

'Every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at' an Englishman in India could not afford to be cowardly'.³⁰

Winton's lack of courage causes his moral degeneration that leads him to his doom. The lack of courage is bound up with Henry Winton as an Englishman in India, a historical

situation in which courage was the whiteman's burden. Under these circumstances Henry Winton's tragedy emerges not as the tragedy of a cowardly man but as the nemesis of every Englishman under similar situation. In the end caught in a cruel trap Henry Winton meets his gory death. His death symbolises the price of fear, lust betrayal and murder K.R.S. Iyenger observes:

'The entire action of the novel has the python-movement, for Winton is caught at the very beginning although he does not realise it; he wriggles he strikes out but coils only get smaller and smaller, and there is no hope for him'.³¹

Malgonkar's imagination is not constrained by historicity and objective truth, it ranges free and wide in Combat of Shadows. Prof. G.S. Amur regards Combat of Shadows as 'a novel of unusual distinction'.³² Malgonkar emerges as a first rate story-teller. The ambivalence of response is evoked by Henry Winton's the hero-villain duality. Readers hate Winton for his treatment of Ruby and Eddie; readers pity him as well for his tragic death in fire. Malgonkar criticises the racial prejudice and emphasises the need for the practice of code values in individual's life. The code values, human beings need to sustain and they have the universal importance, they can make a man man and not an animal. Winton's death seals the necessity and efficacy of the code. Malgonkar, being a man of principles and values upholds the code values and advocates to put them in practice, which is the historical need of our time.

2.2.3

THE PRINCES (1963)

The imperial theme has inspired many an author to portray the glamour and glory of the feudal past but not many writers have been able to portray the inner story-the inner life, the conflict within a prince caught in an age of change and crisis. Several books explain the merger of the states in the Indian union, the history of process, various stages and strategies, the quickness with which it was achieved; for example, V.P. Menon's Story of the Integration of the Indian States; The last days of British India by Michael Edwardes, R.L. Handa's History of Freedom Struggle in Princely States, Last Days of the British Raj by Leonard Mosley, Frank Moraes, India Today, Mission with Mountbatten by Campbell Johnson, Maharaja and Maharani by Diwan Jarmani Dass, E.M. Forster's Hill of Devi, and MulkRaj Anand's. A Private life of an Indian Prince are fictional works which attempt at a depiction of princely India, but have not been able to portray the human story of the princes. These books are written mostly from the point of view of the Freedom Movement. They describe the background of the merger and show it as the ultimate stage in the Indian Freedom Struggle. There are very few books which explain the political situation in the princely states prior to the merger, the impact on the princes of the various stages in the process of the merger and the psychology of the characters involved in this

colossal upheaval, for Example, V.P. Menon's Story of the Integration of the Indian States and R.L. Handa's History of Freedom Struggle in Princely States, which present the political background of this issue but the approach of the authors is democratic and nationalist, they supported the people's movement. These books describe the psychology of the princes and of the people in states where there was the transfer of rule or power from Maharaja to petty officials. Most of these books paint the princely life in dark colours, they describe princes whims, sexorgies, strange out-of-the-way habits, their perverse delights and callous indifference to the praja (subject) These writers think that the princes were 'pools of vice, a jest of history, an anachromism, Britain's Fifth column in India..... relics of mediavalism, sinks of reaction and incompetence, propped up and artificially maintained by British Imperialism'.³³

Diwan Jarmani Dass' books Maharaja and Maharani are based on his an personal experience which describes the extravagant, lustful life of 'the princes. Mulkraj Anand's A Private Life of an Indian Prince shows the biased and diseased mentality of a singular Indian prince; Anand wrote this novel 'primarily to wring out his own frustration over an unrequited love'.³⁴

Malgonkar perhaps has an edge over other writers as he had a quite a long and a deep association with the princes. No

doubt. The Princes is Malgonkar's best novel. Malgonkar goes beyond his self-avowed role as a story-teller. The narrator is Abhayraj, the crown prince of Begwad, an insider-outsider, who views the entire merger drama as both actor and spectator. The sympathies of Abhayraj and the author are obviously with the feudal past. Malgonkar's depiction of the feudal way of life is scrupulously fair. He reveals both its strength and its limitations. Malgonkar tells his story in an amusing way, his awareness of the issues at the stake gives his narrative a larger dimension and makes it a successful political novel.

The Princes depicts a brilliant picture of vanishing scene, the world of the small princely state of Begwad. It is a first person novel with the crown prince Abhayraj, who after becoming the Maharaja after the death of his father, Hiroji Maharaj, narrates in a flashback technique, the motives which moved his father to rule as he did. The book is filled with the events of princely passions and personal tragedy, political history changed into a realistic fiction. The novel traces the history of the princes and shows how in the changed context of the country they had to fight a losing battle against the upsurge of democracy.

Malgonkar's The Princes reveals the bright side of the princely world. He takes an imaginary state; he neither white

washes the ugly patches on the wall nor does he falsify history. He picks up a couple of real characters from the princely world, disguises them sufficiently to conceal their identity. He presents an imaginative account of the happenings before, during and after the merger of the states in the Indian Union. He delineates the honest and truthful princely character that is based on personal experience. This princely character is a bundle of contrasts: the noble and the bigoted, the great and the mediocre, the courageous and the evasive but it is true substantially. We find a great difference when we read A Private Life of an Indian Prince by M.K. Anand, Maharaja and Maharani by Diwan Jermani Dass and Malgonkar's The Princes. The Princes is a novel written by a historian, and the novelist, creates authenticity in the book. He is proud of his veracity. Prof. M.K. Naik observes while commenting on the superiority of The Princes over Maharaja, Maharani and A Private Life of an Indian Prince.

⁶The superb objectivity of Malgonkar's portrait of Maharaja is best appreciated when one compares it with the sensationalism in Diwan Jermani Dass's Maharaja or the poor characterisation of an Indian prince in Anand's A Private Life of an Indian Prince.³⁵

The TLS Reviewer observes :

'In the Princes Malgonkar is neither reciting dull and drab history nor is he narrating a melodramatic spicy tale of inhuman lust, unholy passion and wild eccentricity; he is writing a valuable document'.³⁶

Malgonkar states his theme through a historical irony in the very first chapter of, The Princes. The Princes implicitly believed that they were meant to go on as they were for all the time so long as the sun and the moon themselves went round, (p.11) and yet, after the British left, in no time at all, the red had overrun the yellow and coloured the entire map a uniform orange, the princely states were no more, (P.11). Many questions arise regarding the merger and the situation of the princes. Malgonkar tries to give an honest answer to the questions. At the outset Abhayraj observes, 'We are the princes, no one mourned our passing', (P.11). This is only half the truth. People were unhappy over the change. G.S. Amar observes in this connection :

'It neither caricatures the lives of the Princes by highlighting only the perversities and the absurdities of that private lives.... nor does white washes their tyrrany and debauchery by acts of supression'.³⁷

Malgonkar had friends who were the princes but he felt a little sorry for their appearance. His personal feelings about the princes do not interfere when he presents an authentic picture of the disappearance of the princes. The Princes compares rather favourably with The Private Life of an Indian Prince, Maharaja and Maharani, for the author, with his characteristic touch of authenticity and objectivity does not caricature the lives of the princes.

Malgonkar's forte is his unique and powerful grip of the narrative. He is free from rancour and free from the intense party spirit of the politically committed novelist, free from caricature and exaggeration, self-pity, posturing and assuming of attitudes. 'The Princes can safely claim to be a mile stone in the Indian novel',³⁸ In all his novels Malgonkar is fascinated with the impact of Hitler's war on men and institutions and attitudes. Moving from peace to war in 1939 and again from war to peace in 1945. Things have been subjected to a dark shift of change and transformation.

In this novel The Princes, Malgonkar deals with the contemporary history. The Indian Independence, the merger of the princely states in the Indian Union, and the Second World War are the three historical events of the recent past. Malgonkar remotely mentions the partition of India and the communal

riots. The merger of the states is the central theme of the novel, since two hundred years the princely states in India had existed separately. The British had ceased to interfere with the internal authority of the state rulers, since they had the experience of the Revolt ('Mutiny') of 1857. The states lost their separate existence after the Indian Independence and they remained no longer in the tide of the national movement. Raja Rao's Kanthapura describes the Indian village that represents Indian village. The novel describes the Gandhian nationalism in India. Malgonkar's Begwad, north-Indian native state, in The Princes is a representative of the states; it describes the various phases of the merger. Malgonkar's mouthpiece Abhayraj states the fact, he says: "What was happening in Begwad was happening everywhere else in Padma koshal and in most Indian states." (P.287).

Malgonkar neither mourns over the death of the princely order nor is sentimental over their doom, though he had sympathy for the princes. For him they were like 'ripe mangoes in late May, all ready to fall', (P.244) 'Merger' was carried out in an unceremonious way, which created bitterness. There were many princes who were downright rotten and deserved a summary dismissal. But there were also a few princes who were really good, benevolent, generous and kind to the Praja, they were really good rulers and the anna-datas (food-givers).

The Indian government gave them a raw deal, the people (Praja) mourned over their disappearance in their states. Some of the princes contested the parliamentary elections and got great support from people which shows their place in the hearts of the people. The people still respected them, worshipped them, even after the disappearance of their rule.

Malgonkar reveals the situation and unfolds the psychology of the princes through the character of Hiroji Maharaj, while the sword of the merger was hanging over them.

Malgonkar shows ^{In} The Princes the role played by the politicians which is another historical aspect of the merger. Malgonkar presents the shameful part played by Kanakchand and the official of the States Department in Delhi in the issue of the merger. Malgonkar reveals also the other side of the merger, the princes' side in the novel, except for Malgonkar nobody thought of it. He fuses fact and fiction through his historical imagination. In the historical current of the merger 565 states were swept off their foundations and merged into the totality of India. The greatest fascination of The Princes is to watch the movement.

Malgonkar has created a few impressive characters like Hiroji Maharaj, a unique personality whose courage is boundless. He is a skilled hunter, He faces a hostile crowd of

more than 5000 people alone. He is a born prince and has the instincts of a prince. He is a mixture of good and bad qualities but he is noble and generous. He is impenetrable and a strong supporter of logic, noisily religious and spends vast sums on hunting and entertaining the British guests when his own people were living in filth and poverty. He strongly opposes the introduction of education, railways and modern amenities in his state due to his fear that they may subvert the people's mind. He opposes the Bulwara dam fearing that it may destroy his hold on the poor and ignorant, almost native Bhils. He has narrow vision. He lacks prudence and is unable to read the signs of time. In as late as, 1940, he goes on trusting in and pompously pronouncing prophecies about perpetuity of the princely rule. But on the other hand he is as a man and prince, grand, magnanimous, generous, kind-hearted, a man of understanding and compassion, well-versed in Indian mythology and Western literature. He has a great pride for his ancestors' achievements. Though he whips Kanakchand for his dishonesty, he never objects to the financial help being given to him by the Maharani.

With a fine understanding of Abhayraj's independent nature, he arranges Abhayraj's army postings most modestly and solves the Minnie problem with strange acuteness, even Abhay, admires the way his father arranges these things.

Hiroji Maharaj loves Bulwara Bhils like a father and considers them his personal liability. He has an enormous capacity to swallow insults and humiliation and yet he presents a friendly look to the outside world. He thinks his marriage with the Chandidar girl is an insult to him by his destiny. He abandons his Maharani after the birth of Abhayraj, the heir to the throne. At first Abhayraj was angry with his father for his injustice and inhuman callousness, but later on, he understands his father's orthodox sense of justice and a method in the apparent madness. The Maharani because of Hiroji Maharaja's ruthless neglect and infidelity to her, rebels at last and elopes with Abdul Jan, the palace superintendent, to Pakistan and she is converted to Islam. Hiroji Maharaj swallows this insult and doesn't show any emotional disturbance on his face. It shows, he has a lot of moral courage so that he tolerates such humiliation silently and liberally. The Maharani's elopement is a rude shock to the sensitive Abhayraj. Dr. K.R.S. Iyengar notices, 'It is not surprising that Abhayraj's own life should run a wayward course'.³⁹

Although his marriage is more satisfactory than his father's and in his own way he is devoted to Kamala, his wife, he allows himself to fall headlong into a dubious and romantic, foolish love with Minnie, the Anglo-Indian girl and Zarina, his father's concubine's niece, and for this he has not learnt to regret, repent or feel ashamed.

Hiroji Maharaj never loses the balance of his mind and his calmness even under pressing and critical situations. He rides to the administrative building fearlessly and confidently when he knows that it is occupied forcefully by the Praja Mandal's workers. A situation full with grave consequences turns into one of personal triumph because of his courage, confidence and coolness. The large hostile crowd of more than five thousand shouted 'long live our Maharaja', ' Hiroji Maharaj Ki Jai'. Abhayraj watches the scene from a distance and thanked the people.

The greatest humiliation for Hiroji Maharaj was signing the Instrument of Accession, more bitter humiliation than the Maharani's elopment, which he accepts without showing signs of breaking down. No doubt he suffers but does so silently and unexhibitingly. His brave nature is revealed when he preaches to Abhayraj.

⁶
We never break down in public sorrow, grief a private thing we all have to take a whipping now and then, and the sooner we learn to take it without flinching, without showing that we are hurt, the better... Tears are the refuge of the weak'.
(P.31).

Hiroji Maharaj's greatest hobby and relaxation is shooting

which is an escape from all humiliations. He calls for his Remington gun and shoots copper coins thrown into the air at each humiliation. On the day he signs the Instrument of Accession he shoots twenty three times without a single miss, he broke all past records'. (P.265)

Hiroji Maharaj loses his power and authority which is a great humiliation, but he accepts it with smiling face, without breaking down. He is noble and magnanimous in his resignation and when the doom becomes imminent he prefers suicide to surrender. He lives like a prince and dies like one. He emerges as a magnificent personality and a grand prince. This tragic failure impresses the readers. The Princes is considered as a master piece due to the superb character, Hiroji Maharaj, an unrivalled creation of Malgonkar's. Hiroji Maharaj is modelled on Tukoji Maharaj, the Prince of Dewas senior. E.M. Forster observes :

'I happened to have been in touch with a small maratha state during the years of its dissolution. The Paralles are numerous and heart-rending.' 40

Malgonkar remarked to James Dayanand about Hiroji Maharaj and Abhayraj :

They were sufficiently camouflaged for you not to think of them as real persons..... there is no real person. '41

Malgonkar beautifully transformed a real historical character into a creature of imagination through imaginative situations and by modelling him on the Satpura code values. Malgonkar reveals in Hiroji Maharaj a man who is an idol of the Satpura code, courageous, magnanimous and noble even in his doom and death. Malgonkar has given him a political and historical identity combining skillfully virtues and vices, merits and defects, achievements and failures. Prof. M.K. Naik observes the livingness of Hiroji's character and comments :

Malgonkar's depiction of the feudal world is scrupulously fair. He reveals both its strength and its shortcomings. Its representative, Maharaja Hiroji is a manly figure capable of "sheer physical courage" and of such unshakable loyalty to tradition and his own (however antiquated) idea of honour that he courts death rather than undergoing humiliation by his victorious enemies. At the same time the author does not present him as a paragon of virtues, He is possessed of all the vices as well as characteristics

of his cast class ; the fact that he is an anachromism in the modern world is unequivocally portrayed.'⁴²

Malgonkar brings out all the absorbing traits of a prince character through Hiroji Maharaj who symbolically becomes a universal prince not only an Indian Prince but also one of the world, prince who similarly went down heroically.

The creation of Malgonkar's historical imagination is the elaborate system of education that has imaginative grandeur and historical authenticity of the Satpura code. Hiroji Maharaj provides this education to Abhayraj. That the princes were privately educated for their further tasks as rulers and the British had provided them with the special education through the princes' colleges is a historical fact. Meenakshi Mukherjee notices the resemblance and observes :

'Having been born in a princely family, Abhayraj is subject to a special princely code of conduct. But this code of conduct is not very different from Kiran Garud's code of honour or Henry Winton's ideals of masculine life'.⁴³

One of outstanding stages of the system is provided by the cannon-ball incident. Hiroji Maharaj wants Abhayraj to be a courageous, strong man and never to break down in public. The future Maharaja could not afford to be chicken-hearted, even over his pets. This is highly significant lesson. The Holland gun is another landmark in the education system which is a symbol of princely life and a symbol to chastity. The gun is associated with the honour of Abhayraj's mother.

Mr. Moreton initiates Abhayraj into the code of the gentlemanly behaviour : ' A prince is, first and foremost, a gentleman '. (P.42). Tony Sykes introduces him to the gentlemanly code. The entire Minnie affair is a phase in the education system which is a part of Abhayraj's instillation into the gentlemanly code. Abhayraj's mother's love affair is the last stage of the education system. Abhayraj is shocked by the sad reality of life and he becomes tolerant towards his father's failings.

He develops a full understanding for his father's feelings and failings and his father's magnanimous death with the whirlwind of the Indian Independence and the consequent plight of the princes. Abhayraj realises the life values of his father. He steps into the ruler's role vacated by his father. Abhayraj's character is based on gentlemanly code, its learning and its practice has the historical significance.

Hiroji Maharaj and Abhayraj are the two contrasting attitudes to the princely life as a whole : the father's attitude is medieval, haughty and begoted; the son's attitude is modern, rational and adjusting. Both Hiroji Mahraj and Abhayraj are creatures of imagination, and yet they attain a historical stature. There is the the reverse process of the father-son relationship which begins with the Maharani's elopement and with the fast-moving tempo of the merger activity. Abhayraj agrees completely with his father in his approach to life.

The crux of The Princes is the complex relationship between Abhayraj and his father. Clashing at first they grow closer as the book draws to an end with the princely states fighting for their very existence against the resurgent India. The Maharaja is a queer mixture of good and evil : he is reactionary, fierce in temper, proud and conscious. He is a pious, immoral sensual, tyrannical, even cruel but his unmatched acts of sheer valour and chivalry can eclipse the grossest of human follies and foibles. He belongs mentally to the ancient India's heroic age. The young prince also resembles his father in more than one sense. They share delight in hunting, shooting and horse-riding. Abhayraj joins the army with the advent of the of Second World War. When the war is over he returns to the state. This can be explained, ' Abhay, as a Kshatriya prince, fulfilled his dharma and this is now more important to the Maharaja than his previous

machination against the paramount power.'⁴⁴

During the hour of crisis, rising to the call of personal loyalty to his desparate father, Abhayraj resigns his commission in the Army to assume the responsibility of a heir-apparent to the state. While pointing out the major ironies of the book, G.S. Amur observes :

'Arises from the timing of the change in Abhayraj's role and attitude. Abhayraj's highest moment of awareness of his identity as a prince has a strange coincidence with the disapperance of his princely inheritance itself'.⁴⁵

Hiroji Maharaj and Abhayraj represent the Satpura code, due to which they are courageous, kind generous, brave and loving. They love their Praja or people as a loving father and together they represent the princely world in its totality. The TLS reviewer admires the novelist :

'Mahohar Malgonkar was either a prince himself, and a very royal prince at that, or he must be the ghost of one'.⁴⁶

The merger and its accompanying developments are a matter of the recent past. Malgonkar recreates this history and record, hence E.M. Forster thanks him in the following words :

" I am so glad you have got down a record. Otherwise all would soon be forgotten. " 47

Hiroji Maharaj and Abhayraj are fictional characters; but Malgonkar uses his historical imagination in creating them. So they become the representative figures of their times. James Y. Daymanand observes :

'Their personal characteristics with features and qualities that make them representative figures of their times'. 48

The Princes represented an ancient Indian tradition. It is a political issue to demolish unceremoniously the old institution in a typical way. The political element is assimilated so artistically into the portrait of the central character, which unfolds the drama of the merger.

The princes were promised through the Instrument of Accession that the Union Government would not interfere with

the internal administration in the states, once the princes surrendered their sovereignty over defence, commercial and foreign policy. However the government acted against its assurance and broke its promise to the princes. In The Princes States Deparement in Delhi neglected the complaints of the Maharaja against the activities of the Praja Mandal, a local body of nationalistic workers with their affiliations to the Indian National Congress. The Praja Mandal was encouraged by the congress leaders to intensify its seditious activities to disturb the law and order situation in the states and to enable the Union Government to step in and take over the administration in the states.

The imposition of the Union Police on the Begwad state was unwarranted. The Praja Mandal workers occupied the Administrative building by force. It shows how the government broke its promise and agreement with the rulers.

The fault was with the Praja Mandal, but the punishment was given to the Maharaja. The Joint Secretary in the States Department told the Maharaja curtly that 'there was no question of thinking in terms of holding elections at this stage' and that they may have to consider taking over control even without the ruler's consent' (P.295). The treatment given by the Joint-Secretary to Hiroji Maharaja and Hiroji Maharaja's reaction to it have a historical basis.

Malgonkar describes the deteriorating relations between the Union Government and the Begwad rulers through the two meetings with the Joint-Secretary; the scene of the Praja Mandal's occupation of the administrative building, Mandal's encounter with the Bhils and finally Abhayraj's whipping of Kanakchand. The princes themselves were really reduced to the position of silent and helpless spectators after they had signed the Instrument. The Indian Government leaders didn't show even simple etiquette while they were unjustly putting the princes on the block. Malgonkar shows this callous, inhuman behaviour of the Congress rulers in a small scene. The Maharaj was summoned by the States Department to Delhi. The appointment was fixed at ten with the Joint-Secretary. Hiroji Maharaj leaves the room at ten minutes past, he observes :

'The British I feel would have handled it with much more finesse. They would have been civil even as they were putting on the Block-civil as well as punctual'. (P. 295)

They were called in after fifteen minutes and there was delay due to the secretary's breakfast break. The states were merged without grace, humanity and understanding. Begwad is an imaginary state, its fall has political significance. Kanakchand Gaur, the Begwad Politician is a fictional character which provides the human element of the

contemporary politics. He is mean, malicious and miserly. The power, the political change gave him corrodes the purity of his mind and destroy his inborn noble qualities. He forgets the favour and nursed only the injuries. He become a lawyer due to financial help given by the Maharani. Abhayraj in his school-days helped him in his studies. Kanakchand however forget all this favour and remembered only the public whipping given by the Maharaja. Throughout his life he tried to take personal revenge on his Maharaja. He tells Abhayraj.

'Yes, I suppose, I so want something for myself. I want revenge..... To see the end of your rule here..... the rule of the Bedars. This I have sworn'.
(PP.274-75)

He was poor and honest before he became a Praja Mandal leader. After that he lived a luxurious and comfortable life. His prosperity was due to his corrupt politics. There is a great resemblance between Kanakchand's prosperity as a politician and Jugal Kishore's prosperity as a politician in The Combat of Shadows. Kanakchand is corrupt, selfish, dishonest, mean-minded and type and representative of all the petty politicians in more than five hundred states of India, but he is not portrayed as individual.

In the picture of the princely world there is the character of Charadutt, Abhayraj's half-brother who alings with the enemies

of the state to avenge his personal humiliation. At first Kanakchand and Charadutt were enemies but their common interest of revenge brought them together and they become partners in mission to overthrow the Bedar rule. When Charadutt became the police chief and came to Begwad, he helped the Praja Mandal to aggregate the disturbed political situation in the state instead of assisting the state administration. When Kanackachand and his men occupied the administrative building, his police remained absent deliberately and neglected their duties.

Malgonkar has created faithfully the historical atmosphere in the novel. The focus is constantly on the princely problems. Malgonkar chooses incidents that pertain only to the princely life: The palace life, school life, army life, primitive life, domestic life, sports, hunting, horse-riding, intrigue, appealing, speeches of the politicians, romance, promiscuity, extra-marital sex, concubinage, adventures, violence, revenge, the poisoning of the Yuvraj, occupation of the administrative building and Hiroji Maharaj's death during the tiger-hunt. The tiger room, the Patalpat fort, the Hirabag Palace, the Princes College at Agra and the Bhulwar hills draw attention to the historical atmosphere in the novel. Later on the incidents of the Burma War and the political activities in Delhi keep the tempo of the historical atmosphere. The readers' attention is kept captured and interest heightened with the highly dramatic scenes. The general

impression created by the novel is that the princes, despite their glaring and obnoxious defects, on the contrary were much better than the petty politicians.

Important events in the novel take place in the tiger rugroom where the novel opens and closes which is symbolical. In this room Hiroji Maharaj and Abhayraj quarrel for the first time and are united again. Abhayraj declares his intention to marry Minnie in the same room, the thought of committing suicide enters in Hiroji Maharaj's mind and Abhayraj's mother bids him good bye. All these events, scenes, characters, places and the symbols are fictional and create the historical atmosphere without fault. Saros Cowasjee regards The Princes as 'a fascinating picture of social and political history.'⁴⁹

The rug of 58 tiger skins sewn together has a factual evidence. The Maharaja of Bundi actually still one of 45 skins. Patalpat fort and the underground treasure concealed there in for generations has an actual historical parallel in the Tiger fort in Jaipur where the same strict rule of going blindfolded once in life is scrupulously observed by the ruling princes. R.S. Singh frankly admits. 'The major attractions of the novel are the writer's unbeatable knowledge of history'.⁵⁰

One may not agree with Malgonkar's attitude towards the princely life and the merger of the princely states. One may say

that he has sympathy for the princes and wanted the institution to continue in independent India. He comprehends the forces of contemporary history honestly though it leads him into its his own special theory of history.

Though he has a soft corner for the princes, he also has the historian's detachment to realise that they are all ripe mangoes, good and rotten; all already to drop'.(P. 244)The princes have no place as princes in the modern democratic India. The new order replacing them was definitely welcome.

One of the limitations of The Princes arises from the fact that Kanakchand is not fully delineated. He remains a melodramatic character inspite is of his political credentials. The Princes taking a panoramic view on a larger canvas lacks the tightness of structure in comparison to Combat of Shadows.

The father and son embody innumerable human weaknesses: wildness, temper and sensuality. They are vindictive, violent and fierce and commit adultery but they are man of action and passion and not of intellect and contemplation. Indian, Politicians of the age are caricatured as cowards, cunning, mean and immoderate. The novel intends to stress sensuality, speeches of

politicians, generosity for guests, positive qualities of princes, manly prowess, physical dexterity, chivalry, strategie, intelligence, charity, family-loyalty, respect for ancient customs and feudalism, love, honour, sense of history valour and trust. The novel is a superb of example of Malgonkar's historical imagination, historical sense, historical knowledge and creative imagination. The Princes created an illusion of being a documentary on the fateful history of the last decades of the princely states. Of all the stories of Malgonkar's novels, that of The Princes may be regarded as the best, as it is both appealing and objective. The story of The Princes is free from melodramatic elements, so it appeals to heart and head.

2.2.4

A BEND IN THE GANGES

Malonkar's fourth novel A Bend in the Ganges published in 1964 deals with the recent past of India, like his previous three novels. A sensitive novelist like Malgonkar cannot remain unresponsive to contemporary events. Being a close and honest observer of the Freedom Struggle, being a downright, straightforward, uncommitted critic of men and matters, he could not but choose to deal with the problem of non-violence and violence. A Bend in the Ganges holds up the mirror to the explosive problem of mankind and of nations and beyond all doubt, gains an epic grandeur and universal significance.

A Bend in the Ganges depicts the evil that accompanied the Independence, the emergence of communal discord and the partition of the country on the communal basis. The Hindu-Muslim differences came on the surface and resulted into an alarming violence when the British decided to leave India. The communal riots started in Bengal when Jinnah called for 'Direct Action' and soon the riots spread to the North-West. During the British regime Hindu-Muslim forgot their differences for a particular time and fought against the British, their common enemy. But both the communities became aware of their differences when the Indo British freedom negotiations started. A Bend in the Gages is a story of this discord between these two communities and the volcanic outbreak during the year of Independence. This

communal volcano blasted and the nation was divided into two India and Pakistan on the communal basis.

Non-violence was Gandhiji's ideology : Gandhiji used this powerful weapon to overthrow the British rule. Gandhiji preached to practise non-violence to solve the communal and personal problems. This preaching became successful in politics and India won freedom A Bend in the Ganges raises many questions about Gandhiji's ideology of non-violence and truth and at the same time it finally affirms and celebrates the victory of love over self-destroying violence; nevertheless, what is emphasized in the novel is clear from what Malgonkar himself says in the Author's note :

‘Only the violence in this story happens to be true; it came in the wake of freedom to become a part of India's history. Nothing else is drawn from life.’ (P.06)

Malgonkar explores the influence of violence and non-violence on the nation and the individuals in his novel A Bend in the Ganges and shows how the hidden capacity of man for violence is brought out by the destructive act of others. Non-violence is an ideal; violence is a reality with its roots in the human psyche. According to Malgonkar non-violence has failed to bring the Hindus and the Muslims together.

It failed to destroy the mutual distrust and hatred in the minds of the individuals of the both communities, which is a historical fact. A Bend in the Ganges is a story of this colossal failure and a tragedy of the nation. It is a history of what happened during the partition. The theme of failure of non-violence is also a part of the historical event-the partition. The partition was a sin. Millions of people in India were involved in the partition and the accompanying communal riots. People were slaughtered in great number. Malgonkar analyses the failure of the Indian character during the partition and the massive massacre that followed in the novel A Bend in the Ganges. Malgonkar puts the theme of failure of non-violence in the anxious words of Mahatma Gandhiji :

'It almost appears as if we were nursing in our bosoms the desire to take revenge the first time we get the opportunity..... what if, when the fury bursts not a man, woman or child is safe and every man's hand is raised against his neighbour ?'. (P.05)

A Bend in the Ganges is a historical answer to Gandhiji's question; what happened during the partition is history. The partition and the communal riots, the Second World War and the explosion of the docks in Bombay are the historical events that play major and important role in the novel. A Bend in the Ganges describes the period 1946-47, a crucial period in the history of modern India.

Malgonkar exposes the pervading nature of violence and its roots in his novel by analysing the life and growth of three individuals going through gruesome events. A Beyond in the Ganges is a fictitious story that deals with three young men, their growth towards self-discovery, maturity and understanding of the world.

The whole story of the novel spins around three youngmen Gian Talwar, Debidayal and Shafi Usman. They have different attitudes towards life in general and the problems of modern Indian in particular. The novelist seems to have paid more attention to the character of Gian and Debidayal than that of Shafi and hence they have emerged to be more heroic and impressive. They offer a perfect study in contrast. They are symbolic of two different ideologies violence and non violence. As violence may be of different forms, J. Krishnamurti observes :

Cultured violence, self protective violence , the violence of aggression , the violence of competition, the violence of trying to be somebody, the violence of trying to discipline oneself according to a pattern, trying to become somebody, trying to suppress and bully oneself brutal is oneself, in order to be non-violent.51

Gian's is the native rural background from the traditional India marked by superstitious and taboos. He comes

to Duriabad from a remote village Konshet for higher education and finds himself exposed to a different world that of conflicting values and emotions. Gian passes through a series of ordeals and finally achieves a sense of self-discovery and learns to accept the social problems of life. He is a representative of the majority of the educated young Indians who are attracted towards the western way of life and guiltily conscious of the slavery of their motherland, the poverty and misery in their society, they react to things emotionally. He is typical of the youth of India, 'vacillating, always seeking new anchors, new directions, devoid of any basic convictions'. (P.155)

It is obvious that Debidayal is the perfect contrast to Gian. Debi is the son of a rich industrial magnate Dewan Bahadur Tekchand who is known for his pro-British feelings and his fine collection of art pieces. Debi is confident, aloof, strong-willed, sensitive, tender-hearted, innocent who is transformed into a tough hard-bioled terrorist after a traumatic experience at the age of thirteen when he saw his mother about to be raped by a British soldier who scolded him for spoiling his fun. Debi felt sorry then for his inability to teach the British soldier a lesson. He is able to find a larger base for his individual bitter hatred for the British in the activities of the revolutionaries who have embraced violence as a means for sending the British out of India, Debi represents the small class of educated Indians. They are the cream of the society but misguided.

Shafi Usman is the leader of small group of terrorists at Duriabad. His hatred for the British has its roots in the atrocities committed by Dyer at Jallianwala bagh. He is dynamic and idealistic in the beginning but he betrays his Hindu friends and becomes a staunch follower of Jinna and turns into a fanatic Muslim. Malgonkar through the character of Shafi exemplifies how religious fanaticism poisons the very roots of idealism. Shafi is able to instil in the minds of his followers, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, the ideas of communal solidarity by making them eat both beef and pork, sign in blood for the cause of freedom. He escapes from the fatal grip of the government and carries on the activities of the revolutionaries. Hafij, his leader, advises him to concentrate his activities not against the British but against the Hindus since they are their real enemies. To convince Shafi, Hafij quoted Gandhiji as the devil quotes the scriptures :

(Take Gandhiji's own words' In the midst of darkness, light persists , in the midst of death life persists ! Is it nonsense ? No it is not. It is the peculiar escapism of Hinduism, the utter meaninglessness of words. Light in darkness, life in death; why not violence in midst of non-violence ? That is what I say. In the midst of Gandhiji's non-violence, violence persists. Violence such as no one has country ever seen. That is what awaits this ^{country} The violence bottled up

in those who pay lip-service to non-violence.

The Hindus are preparing for it-to kill us'. (PP.92-93)

Shafi dismisses the whole thing as putting the clock back and he does not want to break the communal solidarity and he can not tolerate the presence of the British in India due to the memory of the Jallianwala bagh massacre. But the poisonous seed of communalism begins to grow in his mind and therefore, he intentionally keeps the Hindu boys of the Hanuman Physical Cultural Club uninformed in advance about the raid on the club. From then on, it is a sordid story of Muslim fanaticism and Shafi is engaged in acts of terror, violence and communal disharmony.

Gian, Debidayal and Shafi Usman at first grow in their small separate worlds; Gian wavers between violence and non-violence, kills Vishnudutt to avenge his brother's death and is transported to the Andamans to undergo life-imprisonment. He becomes the most hated man in the penal colony. Debidayal, a member of Freedom Fighters, a small organisation of devoted terrorist, is betrayed by Shafi and is transported to the Andamans for his anti-British activities. When the Japanese occupied the Andamans both returned to India, Debi stays in Assam and waits for an opportunity to come out in open. Gian gets a job in the Karwar Construction Company and falls in love with Sundari whose marriage was a failure. With the end of the war Debidayal and Sundari proceed towards Duriabad

and Gian, when he hears the reports of communal atrocities arrives in Duriabad to help the Kerwards. They were caught in the communal riot and became the victims of the partition. Gian is thrown into Independent India along with Sundari on the day of Independence. They have lost all their former hopes in life. Debidayal is killed by the Muslim fanatics for being a Hindu, Shafi goes to Duriabad in order to take revenge on Debidayal who had taken away his beloved Mumtaz, a prostitute. Shafi attacks the family of the Tekchands. He kills Mrs. Tekchand and dies a violent death at the hands of Sundari whom he wants to take away and molest as a measure of retaliation against Debi.

Gian, Debidayal and Shafi are the victims of the riots and Hindu-Muslim discord. Their plight is symbolical of the millions who are the victims of the partition. Gian and Sundari represent those Indians who merely survived but lost everything during their fight for survival. Debidayal died like thousands simply being a Hindu. Shafi Usman represents the thousands who were misguided by their Muslim leader. Mumtaz represents those thousands of unhappy young girls who were abducted, raped and cast aside. Tekchand Kerward represents the thousands who lost their earning of lifetime and were broken under the onslaught of the communal madness.

There are various causes of the partition. The mutual hatred between the Hindus and the Muslims occupies the important place. Gian, Debidayal, Shafi Usman, Sundari, Mumtaz and Teckchand are all fictional characters, but they are all victims of the great historical event of the partition. In short, their tragedies are historical.

All the chapters of the novel centre round the theme of violence. Malgonkar has succeeded in weaving a fitting atmosphere for the exposition of the theme of violence, which is the background for the expositions of the main characters-Gian, Debi, and Shafi.

Almost every book on the partition talks of the violence committed during this event. Leonard Mosley observes :

'In the nine months between August 1947 and the spring of the following year, between fourteen and sixteen million Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were forced to leave their homes and flee to safety from bloodcrazed mobs. In that same period over 600, 000 of them were killed. But no, not just killed. If they were children, they were picked up by the feet and their heads smashed

against the wall. If they were female children, they were raped. If they were girls, they were raped and then their breasts were chopped off. And if they were pregnant, they were disemboweled'. 52

'In the Author's Note Malgonkar observes : The Prophetic cry of Shafi Usman," A million shall die" rings in A Bend in the Ganges. (P.145)

Malgonkar's delineation of Gian is significant. Gian's character shows the failure of non-violence. The conflict between violence and non-violence however does not rise to a dramatic pitch, as non-violence represented by Gian is already a weak, self-doubting cause. Gian's initial acceptance of non-violence is a consequence of his impulsive nature, it lacks conviction. When Debidayal asked him "How seriously do you yourself believe in it?" Gian replies. "In non-violence ? With all my being " (P.19) Gian realises that non-violence was really another name of cowardice. After the death of Hari, he feels that non-violence is a weapon to struggle against the British. He is doubtful about its application to life itself. There are many passages in the novel which advocate the use of violence for self-defence and it is also a way of retaliation. Basu advocates violence by calling non-violence merely a pious thought, a dream of the

philosophers'. (P.290) Basu condemns the non-violence in the Indian character besides self-accusation. The use of non-violence for India is impossible, as India is surrounded by China and Pakistan; the hostile countries.

Prof. G.S. Amur rightly observes that it is 'part of the novel's strategy to discredit non-violence and to demonstrate its effectiveness in the context of a life situation' and goes on to say that the value that the novel seeks to affirm is 'the value to love which transcends violence and non-violence'. 53

The failure of non-violence and the defeat of non-violence is suggested symbolically in the novel through Gandhiji's silence during the meetings with which the novel opens.

Malgonkar does not directly advocate violence or discredit non-violence, he only states the facts and points out a total failure of non-violence. Prof. James Dayanand observes regarding the theme of violence :

'From the beginning to the end is man's hidden capacity for non-violence often brought out by the destructive acts of others'. 54

After Jinna's call for 'Direct Action', the Muslims started violence and the Hindus and the Sikhs retaliated in Bihar, Punjab and The NWFP. However Prof. James Dayanand restricts the theme of violence to Gian only. 'A Bend in the Ganges is essentially a study in Gian's growth and his capacity for violence'.⁵⁵

Gian is reduced to a non-entity when the volcano of the communal frenzy bursts. Gian just luckily survives.

Malgonkar's concern with the theme of non-violence is indicated by the question in the words of Mahatma Gandhiji put after the beginning of the novel and the answer to which is provided in the course of the narrative. For a great man like Mahatma Gandhiji, it was impossible to stick to non-violence even in the time of destruction and death but for ordinary men like Gian, Basu and millions of other without the backing of the moral courage, it was just a cry, a near impossibility.

The failure of non-violence is accentuated by the atmosphere of disintegration that prevails in the entire life of the people involved. Prof. G.S. Amur rightly points out :

'The God who rules this world is Shiva, the God of destruction'.⁵⁶

Malgonkar depicts all aspects of Indian life, private, public and political. The partition is the sin of the politicians and communal riots were the curses to the Hindus and the Muslims. Through the character of Gian, Malgonkar exposes the Indian character. Gian is an educated young man, impulsive, wavering, indecisive and a coward. Meenakshi Mukherjee calls him 'essentially a self-seeker and an opportunist'. 57

Gian murders Vishnudutt with courage and he goes to Duriabal to help the Kerwads. He is born in a lower middle class family. He lives in poverty and suffers from inferiority complex. He is afraid of mixing with the upper class people. Gian wavers between fear and courage, decision and indecision, action and inaction. He has impulsive nature, he throws his imported sports jacket into the fire voluntarily, he does it out of momentary impulsiveness. He feels to turn back and to fight down his irrational impulse but he realises that it was already too late. His action during the family quarrel shows his indecisive, inactive and hesitating nature. When Vishnudutt challenges Hari, Hari goes ahead without fear but Gian feels dying with an unknown fear. Gian knows his drawback. He felt ashamed after the death of Hari. He curses himself :

'Coward.....Coward'..... Was that why he had embraced the philosophy of non violence without question-from physical cowardice, not from courage? Was his non-violence merely that of the rabbit refusing to confront the hound? (P.50)

When he overcomes his fear, he murders Vishnudutt with an axe and he presents himself before the police. He moves away stealthily from Sundari when his lies are exposed by her. He curses his bad luck. When the communal riots started he rushed to Duriabad to help her, Gian stumbled throughout his varied career. Gian's loyalties are hopelessly divided : He is attracted by Gandhiji's philosophy of truth and non-violence on one side and on the other he admires Patrick Mulligan the Andaman's strict British Jailor for whom Gian becomes a spy consequently becomes the most hated man in the Penal Colony of the Andamans. Gian sells the family idol for money and he is prepared to settle in the Andaman, provided he gets a job and wife. He is not a man of conviction. Being shallow and weak Gian fears violence. He lacks ambition and prefers inaction.

Balbahadur represents the large community of Indian officers, the British ruled India with the help of such officers. The Brigadier of the Liberation Army is another Indian character. Malgonkar ridicules the Brigadier. There were men like the Brigadier, thousands upon thousands in India,

who represented all rotten and degrading in the country who were corrupt and dishonest. Malgonkar reveals the failings of the Indian character through Gian Balhadur and the Brigadier, which has a historical significance.

Malgonkar practises what Luckas argues :

'True great realism depicts man and society as complete entities instead of showing merely one or the other of their aspects.' 58

The admiration for the British character voiced by many characters in the novel through contrast, highlights the flaws in the Indian character. Malgonkar's attitude towards the Indian character, the Indian Gods and philosophy is critical. He presents the Indian Gods as deciding and judging the destiny of the individuals and the races. They are shown like human beings. They are indifferent to the good and bad alike. Shiva is the ruling deity, destroys Debidayal, Radha, Shafi, Mumtaz, Tekchand and millions. His 'Tandava Nritya' is the dance of destruction which suggests the catastrophe of the communal slaughter. The justice of god is denied to Debidayal who is killed mercilessly. Though Dada was the disciple of Vishnu and a devotee of Shiva, neither the God of preservation nor that of destruction saves his family from the complete destruction. Hari arranges a

mahapooja of Shiva for winning the case, but before the ritual, he is killed. In spite of this devotion, Shiva wrecks the Little House. Aji is the root cause of feud; she is Gian's grand-mother who belongs to a lower caste, hence is not accepted at the Big House by the women. Neither Vishnu nor Shiva save the Talwar family from its annihilation. Malgonkar describes the picture of rural life in Konshet which represents microscopically the Indian life in villages of India. There is a subtle irony in the description. Malgonkar indirectly criticises the ambivalent attitude of the Indians towards religion through Gian, the Talwar and Kerwars who are opportunists and self-seekers.

There are various reasons of the partition and the consequent violence- the Hindu - Muslim discord, the failure of non-violence and the failings of the Indian Characters. Malgonkar analyses the causes of this historical catastrophe.

Thus, A Bend in the Ganges is a story of three young persons of India whose lives are shattered by the violence of the partition. At the historical level these three persons represent the three large section of the Indian population that was caught in the great and destructive fire of the communal riots. They are not real persons but they are the fictitious creatures. Mahatma Ghandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru, the only historical persons, appear in the novel but they do not participate in the action. The major incidents take place at Duriabad in West Punjab, Bombay and the Andamans which are related to the historical events used in the novel; Duriabad witnesses the major scenes of the communal riots; the Andamans reveal the impact of the Japanese in the Second World War; and Bombay witnesses the

explosion of Docks in 1944. Though the places are geographically real, the incidents happening there are fictitious. In fact, the partition, the occupation of the Andamans, the burning of the military plane and post office, the great explosion of Bombay docks, the cutting up of telegraph wires and telephone connections, removing fish plates from under rails, blowing up of the bridges, breaking up the statues of the Britishers have the historical background. All characters and incidents are fictitious, excluding the above incidents. As Lukacs observes :

'What matters therefore, in the historical novel is not retelling of great historical events but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events. What matters is that we should re-experience the social and human motives which led men to think, feel and act just as they did in the historical reality.' 59

Malgonkar does exactly this in his A Bend in the Ganges is Malgonkar created an accurate historical atmosphere in the novel. The historical events are the integral parts of the narrative structure. The partition riots towards the end become the real leading character and shape the destinies of all the characters and the millions of the

victims of the holocaust. The communal storm becomes the only dynamic character after the explosion of the communal volcano. This communal storm makes Gian, Sundari, Debi dayal etc. helpless, lifeless and completely destitute. The train journey of Debidayal and Mumtaz suggests the mutual hatred, complete insecurity and the insane destruction. Avtar Singh, the leader of the sikh community in Duriabad and his family are assaulted by a big muslim mob and through the phone sounds are made to listen to the atrocities being committed on the group along with Tekchand Kerwar. All the scenes are fictional, but they are like the historical documents. Malgonkar calls A Bend in the Ganges 'a felt experience.'⁶⁰ A felt experience is changed into an absorbing novel of the partition. R. P. Singh calls A Bend in the Ganges an epic of the Gandhian era'.⁶¹ Richard Church observes :

'The general impression is similar to that which moves War and Peace, the portrayal of the large tides of human life when something occurs to rouse them to insane fury... The paradox of life is there and out of it the author has made a work of art',⁶²
 The novel having only 'melodramatic' instead of ^{M.K. Naik finds} epical effect because his vision is hopelessly circumscribed by his inability to look beyond the sheer horror and brutality of it all.'⁶³

The revenge motif adds an epic dimension to A Bend in the Ganges. It is a story of multiple revenge : Gian Talwar avenges his brother's death by killing the killer, Vishnudutt, Sundari takes revenge against her husband for his adultery and commits similar sin, Debidayal avenges Shafi Usman by buying off his favourite girl Mumtaz; later on Sundari takes revenge on Shafi Usman by killing him for her mother's death.

A Bend in the Ganges presents the life that has the richness and variety of an epic. The novel moves all over India from Duriabad to Kanshet, Bombay, Calcutta, the Andamans, Rangoon and returns to Duriabad via Madras, Bombay and Lahore. The pictures of life presented in this picaresque pattern of the narrative have the diversity and dimensions of an epic. The slave-like existence of the prostitutes in Lahore, the life of convicts in the Cellular Jail during the Second World War that of the Jaoras on the Andaman beach, the rich world of Bombay, the aristocratic life of Kerwar House and that of the rustic peasants in Kanshet with their petty family quarrels, the drab and dull life struggle of the dock workers etc. together present a fascinating panorama of the vast and varied Indian life. Malgonkar excels in realistic presentation of the Indian life.

Despite the richness and variety of life and the broadness of canvas, it is difficult to call A Bend in the Ganges an epic. Gian, Debidayal, Shafi Usman, Sundari, the principal characters in the novel, are supposed to represent a large piece of the Indian population, but they are so often involved in their own dilemmas. They emerge neither as individuals nor as representatives. There is not a symbolic value when Gian survives and Debi dies. Generally A Bend in the Ganges is compared to other novels on partition horrors and bestiality. Prof. Iyengar says :

' Novels on the "partition" horrors and bestiality are legion but it is not often they transcend sentimentalism and achieve the discipline of art.' 64

A Train to Pakistan

Prof. Iyengar observes in connection with ^{A Train to Pakistan} 'The whole horror is there but also humanity and compassion.' 65 The recent novel Azadi by Chaman Nahal accepts the partition as a fact, an inevitable happening and the novelist does not blame anybody for the partition, Khushwant Singh, however, launches a frontal attack on Nehru. In the case of A Bend in the Ganges Malgonkar blames the lack of vision and understanding of reality on the part the preachers of non-violence especially Gandhiji. It seems Malgonkar's novel is different from other novels its main concern is not

the graphic and effective portrayal of the partition and its horror. It is true that he has utilized it as to prove his thesis how violence forms a strong strain in the fabric of human character.

The Hindu-Muslim discord and the philosophy of non-violence are too large issues to be tackled in the novel. The picture of the communal hatred is not adequately relieved by the scenes of communal love or harmony. In this respect Chaman Nahal's Azadi (1973) and Khushwant Singh's A Train to Pakistan (1956) are more realistic. The creeds of violence and non-violence have very disproportionate representation in A Bend in the Ganges; non-violence represented by Gian weak and wavering, appears as a lost cause whereas Debdayal who advocates violence changes his direction to non-violence. One agrees with Prof. Amur that the novel 'neither upholds non-violence nor endorses violence as a way of life.'⁶⁶ This ambiguity makes the focus diffused. The Hindu and the Muslim characters are not properly juxtaposed. The flaws of the Hindu characters are delineated in detail and that of the Muslim characters are just indicated. Shafi and Hafiz are inadequate as representatives of the Muslim character.

The glaring drawback in A Bend in the Ganges is its melodramatic excess. Maigoukar insisted on the story telling element and so he has inadvertently sacrificed the epic potentiality of the material.

Love affair between Gian and Sundari lacks conviction. Sundari's sudden love for Gian during the docks explosion, her initiative in love-making and her use of Gian to take revenge upon her husband lack lustre and reality. James Dayanand criticises the melodramatic elements in the novel; his criticism of the novel seems to be justified :

'One gets the impression that there are too many episodes and too many stories which appear separate and detachable, they simply do not hang together.'⁶⁷

A Train to Pakistan and Azadi are romances where as A Bend in the Ganges is historical novel proper. Malgonkar synthesizes truth and imagination, history and art. His grasp of his material is more firm and convincing. Malgonkar reproduced much more faithfully the spirit of the Indian history fully than a historian does. Malgonkar's A Bend in the Ganges is a historical novel. There is an accurate creation of the historical atmosphere. Malgonkar has meticulously maintained the chronological accuracy of the historical events and has accommodated them very skillfully in the narrative structure. The historical events are integral parts of the narrative structure.

Meenakshi Mukherjee Observes :

'A Bend in the Ganges in panoramic is scope and epic in aspiration, crowded with events from modern Indian history, beginning with the Civil Disobedience Movement of the early thirties and ending in the post-partition riots in the Punjab'.⁶⁸ A Bend in the Ganges differs from K.A. Abbas's Inquilab (1955)⁶⁷ not merely in the number of great national events but there is a fundamental difference of point of view. In Inquilab ,history is important because it makes an impact on individuals, but in A Bend in the Ganges Malgonkar is more interested in events and episodes for their new values and sensation rather than for their effect on men and women. It is not that the novel is totally devoid of human interest.

Professor Iyenger says that the title significantly enough comes from Ramayana : ' At a bend in the Ganges, they paused to take a look at the land they were leaving'⁶⁹. The title strikes the optimistic attitude of the novelist. It is only a bend, a turning in the Ganges, but it is not the end of the Ganges which perhaps has number of bends, some may be terrible, but there is no implication that all are horrible. The next bend may prove better and perhaps people with their experience at this bend may find their next bend to be a happy one. In terms of violence and non-violence Malgonkar seems to hold the opinion that violence is a part and parcel of life. It can not be avoided altogether. It seems

negation of this fact is blissful blindness. One can avoid it only by accepting its existence in life and by boldly facing it but not by preaching non-violence blindly. The irony of human life is that it does not want to learn by its previous experience. As a result, one finds violence and force in life permanently and people again and again, fall into the same mire and the bloodshed.

Malgonkar's attitude towards Gandhiji and his policies is similar to that of the novelists of Post Independence period in whom one finds a pluralistic approach and a questioning attitude which is not found in the novelists of the Pre-Independence days who took upon themselves the burden of propagating the non-violent policies of Gandhi, as they believed in them implicitly. To this R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao are no exceptions. Shri Ram in Waiting for Mahatma Lalu Singh in The Sword and Sickle and Murthy in Kanthapura are the examples.

G.S. Amur very ably refutes the charge of sketchiness against A Bend in the Ganges by stating that it is unjust to the thoroughness with which Malgonkar explores the

different areas of experiences presented in the novel :

'In spite of the wide canvas on which he has chosen to work the effect he creates is one of intensity and not of diffusion. This is as true of the rural tragedy, he presents in the early chapters of the novel as of the cataclysmic events of the partition which form the substance of the closing ones.' 70

The criticism of A Bend in the Ganges by Robertson as a novel suggesting that 'Modern India was made by heroes like Debidayal and consists of a nation of Gians.' 71

'Meenakshi Mukherjee observes : 'A Bend in the Ganges is not so much a story of men and women as of places and episodes, not an integrated human drama but an erratic national calendar.' 72

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